

Survey on Training and Certification in Europe

Pace Project



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci
Pilot Projects

General Introduction

This Survey Report contains the results of a survey in 6 European countries on national structures of vocational education and training and on the existing systems and procedures for job qualification and certification. The research was conducted as part of the PACE-project, a name that refers to: “**Partial Certification** for lower and medium level vocational training”. This project started on the 1st of October 2003 and will continue until the end of September 2005. The aim of the project is to provide suitable opportunities to people with limited learning capabilities to obtain a job qualification that will improve their chances on the labour market.

The importance of the target group addressed by this project is considerable in terms of numbers and in terms of the difficulties experienced when attempting to find a job on the open labour market: *people on lower and medium educational levels in need of suitable certification*. This target group consists of the following subgroups (which may be partially overlapping):

- *People in sheltered work environments* who are not in possession of an acknowledged job qualification
- *Unemployed people in disadvantaged positions*: people with physical and/or mental disabilities
- *Young school deserters* without a suitable job qualification
- *Adult learners* who want to improve their job opportunities
- *Working people* who want to improve their employability and present working skills
- *Immigrants* needing new (partial) qualifications to evidence their skills and competences

The project is carried out by 11 organisations (and their regional partners) in 6 European countries with substantial financial support from the Leonardo da Vinci Programme of the European Commission aiming at innovation in the vocational training sector. At this occasion the partners would like to express their gratitude for this support:

- Atrium Research & Innovatie BV (Geleen), the Netherlands; project coordinator
- FTB, Akamedia (Volmarstein), Germany
- COGAMI (Santiago de Compostela), Spain
- CESO (Maastricht), Trigos Support (Elsloo), ECABO (Amersfoort), all three in The Netherlands
- CAR (Timisoara), Romania
- Aisteda University (Alba Iulia), Romania
- BBJ (Ljubljana), Slovenia
- Second Chance School of Leeds, United Kingdom

As a result of this survey the partners were able to identify gaps in the professional education and certification offer for which an effort in terms of development of new training programmes and partial certificates seems necessary and relevant. The results of this development will become available during the second year and will be presented to the educational sector in the participating countries and in other European countries.

The prime and ultimate objective of the project is that people who are presently deprived of access to vocational training and consequently to job opportunities on the open labour market, will have appropriate opportunities in the near future for their personal development and full participation in social and economic life. Partial certification in combination with flexible and competence oriented approaches to learning, will most surely provide new opportunities to people who are threatened with lifelong exclusion from work.

The authors expect that this Survey Report will pave the way for implementation of the project's present and future outcomes in a broad European context.

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GERMANY

1. INTRODUCTION

This survey and field research describes the state of the art of existing methods of certification and recent movements and developments in the German VET system. It is based on the results of the work packages 1-4 of the research section of the PACE project.

The information is in one part collected from various internet sources. The web-presence of the federal institute of vocational education (www.bibb.de) as well as the good-practice database (www.good-practice.de), the publication service of the federal ministry of education and research (<http://deutschland.dasvonmorgen.de/publikationen/index.php>) and the literature database for vocational education (www.aidossoftware.com) turned out to be primarily useful for the research process. Articles in relevant professional journals have been analysed, too.

The literature survey has been complemented by several interviews with experts in the field of vocational education, providing a lot of complementary information to practical aspects of VET in Germany. For a more precise description of the practice of assessment and certification, representatives of the chambers of commerce and industry have been contacted. The theoretical view on the German VET system has been deepened by an information request to an expert in vocational education science at the university of Dortmund.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN GERMANY

2.1. Basic structure of Germany's education system

The following description of the German education system in figures 2 and 3 uses colour coding according figure 1 below.

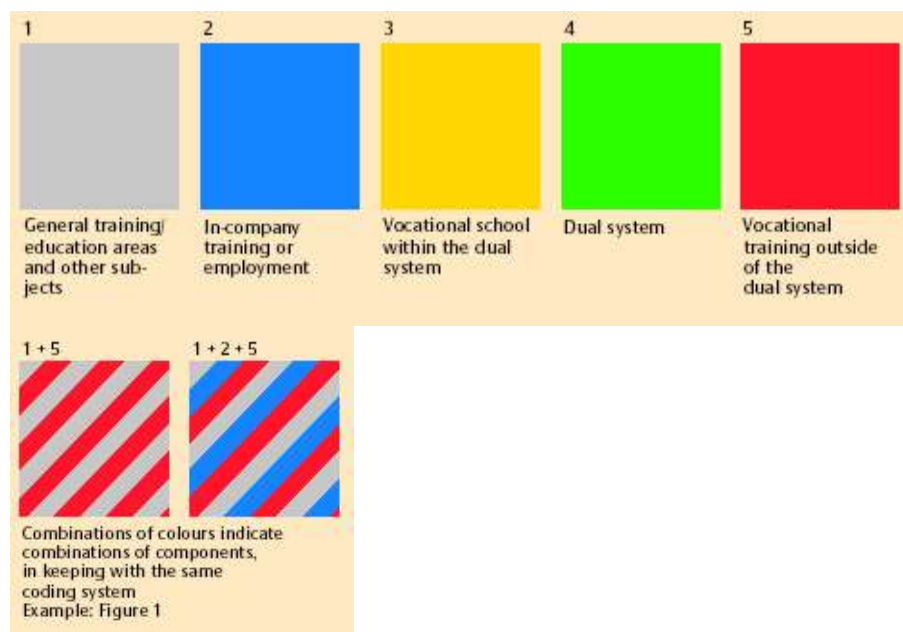


Fig. 1: Colour-coding for BMBF figures (BMBF 2003).

Figure 2 “provides a highly simplified overview of the basic structure of the education/ training sector in the Federal Republic of Germany, divided by training areas/types of schools” (BMBF 2003).

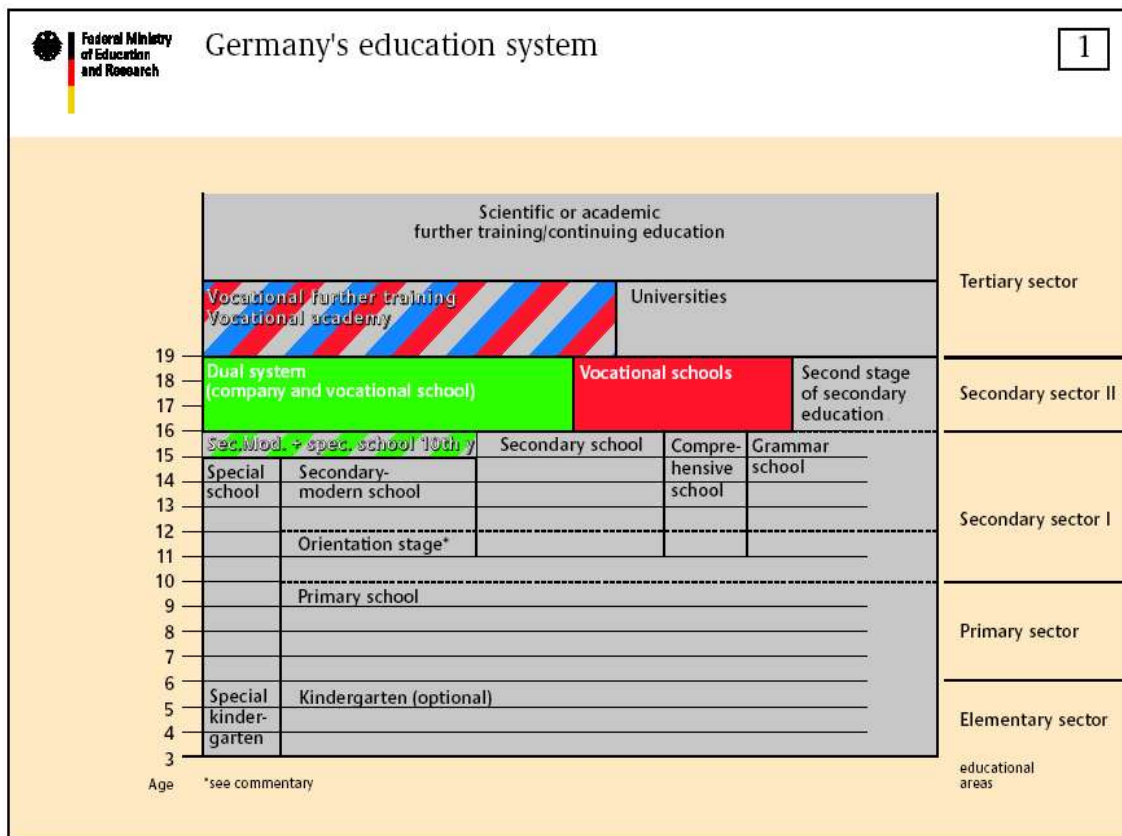


Fig. 2: Education system in Germany (BMBF 2003, slide 1).

Compulsory education begins at the age of six with full time schooling, lasting nine years in general. If young people do not continue full-time-school, they “are required to attend part-time (vocational) school for three years”. So compulsory education in Germany lasts “from the ages of 6 to 18” as a rule, for trainees in the dual system even longer (BMBF 2003). Every school leaver regardless which specific kind of school in sector 1 of secondary education he/she visited – there are different schools in different federal states - is potentially admitted to the dual system of vocational education. Chapter 3.5 of this report will provide a closer look on the different qualification-systems [e.g. dual and vocation school education].

Besides working as skilled employees after completed vocational education, access to the tertiary level of education is given by certain forms of vocational further training, used by many graduates. “Under certain circumstances, graduates of such training can also acquire a university entrance certificate ... and ... go on to university studies. ... Some 20 % of all first-year students come to higher education after having completed training in the dual system.”(BMBF 2003). Certain certificates of full-time vocational school education give restricted access to university education. “On the whole, there are many possibilities for transition between school-based and dualsystem vocational training and for transition from vocational training to higher education”(BMBF 2003).

2.2. Education levels pursuant to ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education)

The following figure „provides a basis for a first ... orientation“ comparing examples of applied measures of education on the right with “the education levels pursuant to ISCED” on the left side. (BMBF 2003)

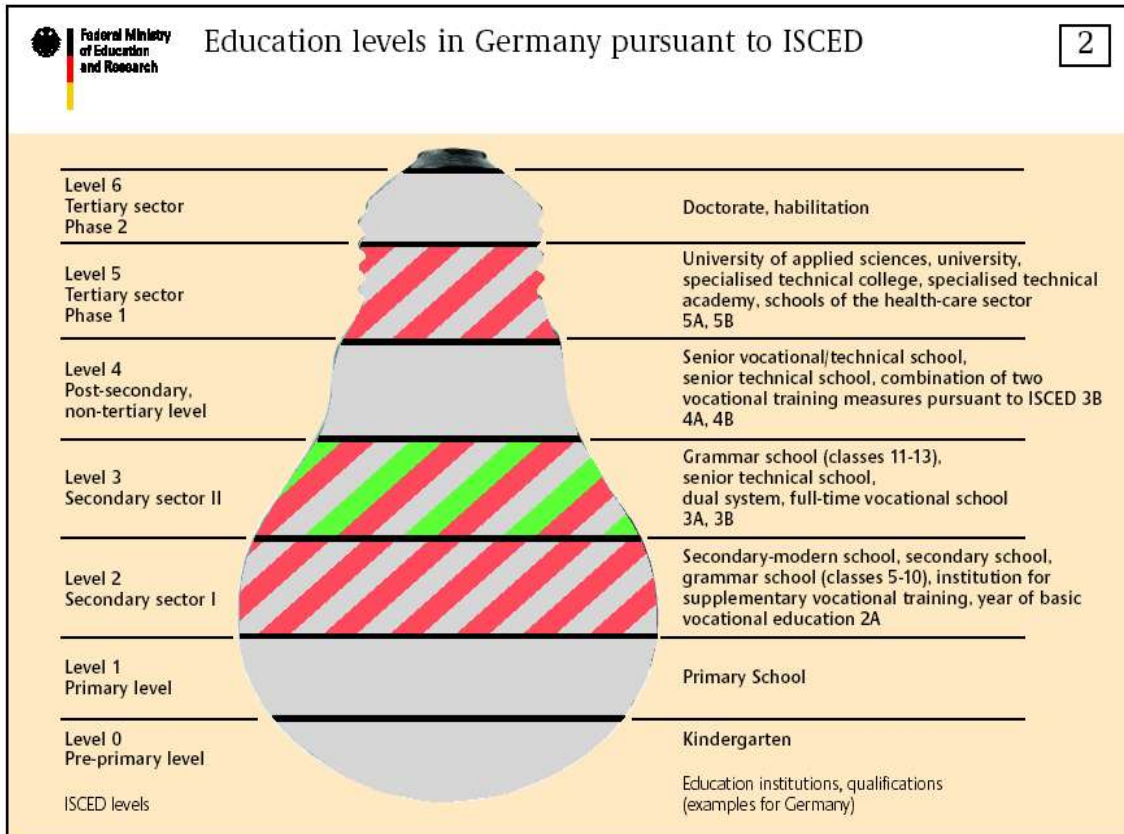


Fig. 3: Education levels in Germany (BMBF 2003, slide 2).

Especially measures of vocational further education as well as healthcare-sector schools and senior technical schools, which do play an important role in vocational education, don't correlate completely with the international standard given by the ISCED. This system cannot fully reflect the diversity and variety of exceptions of the German qualification system. "Such difficulties in correlation must ... be taken into account in international statistical comparisons" (BMBF 2003).

3. THE VET & CERTIFICATION SYSTEM IN GERMANY

The German VET and certification system offers a wide range of qualifications on different levels (e.g. basic, general and specific vocational education, additional qualifications) with a great variety of organisational forms and certificates leading to a very big number of different occupations and possibilities of further education. The following chapters will try to guide the reader through this complex patchwork.

3.5. Historical development

According to Greinert's typology of basic training models (Greinert 1994, 13ff) the German qualification system belongs to Model 3, in which "the state sets more or less comprehensive vocational training guidelines for private enterprises and other private training providers." (ibid., 15).^{*} The development of this system started in the 1870's as a result of "dramatic social developments in middle class capitalist society" (ibid., 20) leading to a "revival of the corporative apprenticeship model of the craft trades" (ibid., 20). This revival was accompanied by the development of the further training school which was meant to "bridge the gap ... between elementary school education and the start of military service" (ibid., 20). During the following decades and different political systems, influenced by the different interests of enterprises and trade unions, "the corporative vocational training model of the craft trades survived..." and "...became 'the prototype of German vocational education' "including all industry related occupations. (ibid., 21) The dual system became a fully designed qualification system by the release of the vocational training act [BBiG] in 1969.

Nowadays "approximately 350 state-recognised occupations are the basis for a structured and uniform vocational education to skilled worker/employee level. They open the door to a variety of occupational activities and to further training. There are approx. 25,000 gainful occupations"(Pütz 2003, slide 35). At present 65% of a one-year age group of young people in Germany attend some kind of vocational education. 25% attend higher secondary education at University. About 10% of a one year age group are identified as disadvantaged being not able to succeed in traditional training concepts (Pütz 2003, slide 9).

One of the most serious recent problems of the German VET-System is the shortage of places for apprentices in the dual system. Only 30% of all companies provide vocational training, at all (BMBF 2004, 5). Because of the decreasing number of training companies, a loss of prestige of acknowledged occupations and partially increasing job specifications and prolongation of training periods since several changes in 1987, Biermann considers the dual system as an obsolescent model with urgent reformation needs (expert interview: Biermann, 2004).

3.6. Legal framework

The legal framework for all medium and lower level measures of vocational education in Germany is given by the vocational Training Act (BBiG), of 1969 covering training regulations for all vocational education in terms of vocational training preparation, vocational training, vocational further training and vocational retraining or rehabilitation (BBiG §1). The Act for the Regulation of Crafts (HwO) of 1965 is another important statute with analogue regulations for all skilled trade.

§ 25 of the BBiG provides a minimum standard for training regulations of any acknowledged profession. The vocational Training Act (BBiG) allows that training regulations can define a factual and chronological classification of different grades of vocational education (BBiG § 26). The BBiG points out three grades of education, a basic, a general and a specific vocational education. Each grade has to lead either to complete qualification for a job or to continuation of Vocational training in the next grade (BBiG §26). These are grades of national acceptance and not comparable to the European sedoc-system.

The vocational education of people with disabilities is covered by §§48 - 49 of the BBiG. Aiming at the prevention or abbreviation of unemployment, part 3 of the social code of law (SGB III) provides furtherance options for vocational education and rehabilitation for different groups of disadvantaged people as far as the target vocational education is approved by the BBiG or HwO.

3.7. Financial framework

VET in Germany is provided through different qualification systems with the organisational forms dual-system, vocational school and training-centre (see: chapter 3.5 and fig. 3 of the appendix)

^{*} Training systems according to the models 1 and 2 are characterised by either no or an exclusive role of the state regarding the control over vocational training (Greinert 1994, 13f)

and different financial responsibilities. The different funding systems can be described as follows:

Dual system: The mixed financing of the dual system, is based on its both pillars company and school. The companies/employers are paying salaries for apprentices, whereas the federal states refund the school part of vocational education.

School: Vocational schools in the form of “Berufsfachschulen“, to a big part educating future health-professionals can be private as well as state funded. The private schools are often run by one of the national charity-associations, a health insurance company or a trade union.

In Germany social legislation is trying to ensure vocational qualification for everybody. VET in private funded schools can be very expensive. The law for the promotion of vocational education “BAFÖG” provides financial support for young people out of lower income families.

Training-centre: The training centres for vocational education are mainly private funded. Some bigger companies run their own training centres. There are training centres belonging to the chambers of commerce and industry, or trade. Others are run by private educational institutions. Special training centres for the vocational rehabilitation are either private funded or run by national charity-associations or the federal state social administration. The claim to a first vocational qualification is ensured by the third social law-book “SGB III”, covering matters of vocational rehabilitation. Besides the individual financial support for apprentices, special vocational schools and the basic vocational training year for unskilled youth is state financed by the SGB III. Specific training courses by the national job agency are funded by the SGB III, too.

3.8. Organisations (accreditation bodies, national bodies, training providers, organisations with a specific interest)

The institutional frame of the German VET-system is characterised by four different levels of responsibilities. Fig. 1 of the appendix names the institutions involved “Top down” from the federal level to the company level (see: Pütz 2003, slide 24).

The release of new or modified training regulations by the government is a result of a multi-graded and complex process where different bodies on the federal and the federal state level are involved. The Federal Institute for Vocational Training [BiBB] draws up new or modified training regulations for the company related part of vocational education. Fig. 2 of the appendix illustrates the members and tasks of the BiBB board (see: BMBF 2003, slide 24). Experts of the “Länder” who are nominated by the ministries of cultural and economic affairs on the federal state level establish a draft of the new or modified curricular framework. The development of new or modification of existing training regulations has to be tuned closely to this curricular framework. Therefore the drafted regulations are discussed and followed up in a process of separate and crossover committees with expert-representatives of the federal ministry of education and research, other government departments and different national federations, representatives of the federal state ministries, representatives of trade unions and employers. The release of the finished and fully developed training regulations is effected by announcement in the federal law gazette by the government and becomes legally effective the following August 1st each year. The following figure illustrates this complex co-ordination process.

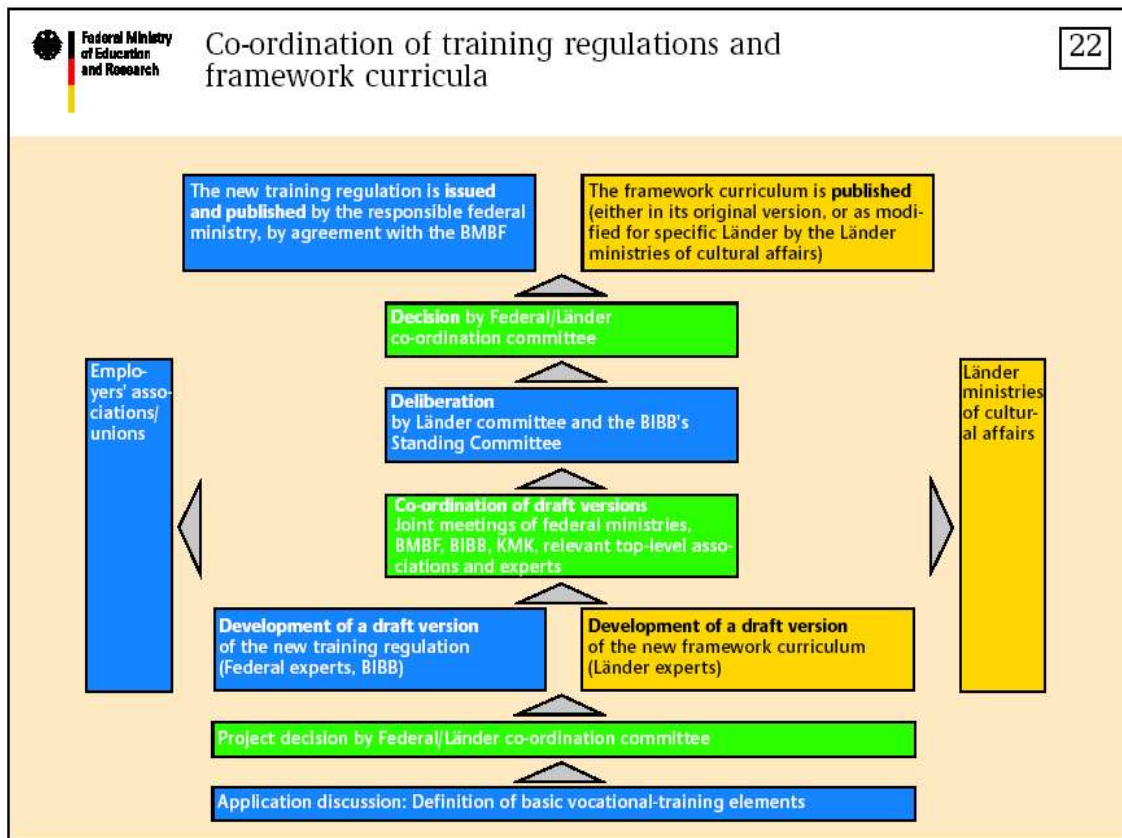


Fig. 4: Co-ordination of training regulations and framework curricula (BMBF 2003, slide 22).

On the regional level the presidents of the regional administration and competent bodies of the chambers of commerce and industry, trade and agriculture, are responsible for registration and certification. The chambers are concerned with contractual matters of VET and the implementation of training regulations. They complement VET in the Dual system by special courses in their own training centres, because not every company is able to provide all needed training environment and equipment to accomplish certain qualifications (expert interview: Fürsich, 2004).

The chambers execute certification for apprentices as well as trainer certification. Furthermore they can define requirements for lower level qualifications according §48 BBiG, but the resulting certificates are only acknowledged in the district of the certifying chamber.

On the company level training companies and vocational schools execute the practical and theoretical part of vocational education according the existing guidelines and regulations.

The invention or amendment of training regulations leading to formal [regional or state-wide] acknowledged certificates is usually following a "top down approach". The associated complex process has already been described in this chapter. On the other hand the recently released benchmark figures for the reform of VET demands the promotion of regional responsibility for a better integration of regional economic needs with the potentials of regional VET providers (BMBF 2004, 3) as well as the diminution of the bodies and the committee-structure of the Federal Institute for Vocational Training [BiBB] (BMBF 2004, 13). These are promising evidences promoting initiatives to innovations in the formal qualification systems originating from the regional or company level, which have been modestly successful, so far.

3.9. Qualification systems

Vocational education and training at the lower and medium educational level has three organisational forms:

	<i>Organisation form and proport. participation</i>	<i>Training sites</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Other characteristics</i>
1.	Dual System, 66 % (1.700.000)	3 days/week in the company, 2 days/week part-time vocational school	lasting three years as a rule	Apprentices have an own income
2	School 27 % (600.000)	5 days/week in specialised full-time vocational school	lasting one to three years	many occupations in health service/ longer practical phases*
3	External training centre, 7% (150.000)	3 days/week in the training centre, 2 days/week part-time vocational school	lasting three years	E.g. VET for people with disabilities/ In some cases complimenting dual system VET

Table 1: acc. (Pütz 2003, slides 9 and 10).

The Dual System with 2/3 of all apprentices is obviously the most frequented form. Vocational training in the dual system stands open to everybody. Access to the dual system is formally not bound to a regular secondary school graduation (BIBB [edit.] 2004).

“Among all vocational (full-time) schools, the full-time vocational schools known as «Berufsfachschulen» have the largest numbers of pupils. These schools prepare pupils for occupations” especially in the health-sector [author’s comment] “or for vocational training – usually within the dual system. Under certain circumstances, attendance at a full-time vocational school can be credited as the first year of training within the dual system” (BMBF 2003). “One out of about every six pupils at full-time vocational schools learns a recognised occupation” usually [author’s comment] “requiring formal training, within the dual system” (BMBF 2003). In these cases the final school examinations can be acknowledged equally to the relevant examinations in the dual system by federal ordinances.

VET in external training centres is often complimenting dual system qualification measures. Training centres often can offer additional possibilities for qualification and specialisation, smaller companies aren’t able to provide (Exp. Interview Velten 2004). External training centres cover a big part of the vocational rehabilitation measures for people with disabilities.

3.10. Quality standards / assurance in VET

The dual system with its two branches [company and school] has two separate frameworks of quality standards for every occupation profile. The company-training part of VET is covered by the training regulations given by the BIBB. The part of vocational school education is covered by the common skeleton curriculum, the federal state ministries of cultural affairs are responsible for. Both frameworks have to be balanced and harmonised in a quite complex process as described in chapter 3.4. They have the function of a minimum standard for VET in every accredited occupation profile.

* “Schools within the health-care sector – for example, schools that train hospital personnel – ... have large enrolments”(BMBF 2003).

3.6.1. Training Regulations (minimum standard)

According § 25 BBiG (2), training regulations for any acknowledged occupation have to describe at minimum:

- The occupational title
- The duration: two to three years
- A catalogue of skills and knowledge
- A training framework plan
- The exam requirements

3.6.2. Common Skeleton Curriculum

The common skeleton curriculum needs to determine at least the following subjects:

- Fields of Learning (thematic)
- Learning goals (result)
- Study contents (technical)
- Suggested time allocation (hours of instruction) (Pütz 2003, slide 20)

It is effectual state-wide in every vocational school. Slight modifications between the federal states are possible (Exp. Interview Velten 2004).

3.6.3. Articles of apprenticeship / Indentures

Another important tool of quality assurance is given by the so called “folder of articles of apprenticeship”, the chambers administer. When a contract for apprenticeship between a company and a trainee is signed it has to be put down in the folder of the responsible chamber. This administrative act enables the employer and the trainee to proof the apprenticeship. For this it's a precondition that Employers are registered as a qualified training site. Special training advisors of the chambers are assessing the qualification of companies who train for the first time.

3.11. Assessment procedures & testing

In the German dual-system of VET the common instruments for assessing knowledge and performance of apprentices are

- weekly training reports,
- interim examination
- and final examination.

3.7.1. Exam admission requirements

Exam admission requirements are defined in the examination-regulations-standard in the annex to § 41 of the vocational Training Act (BBiG). According § 8 of the examination-regulations-standard, admission to the final examination is given for all apprentices having fully attended their training period, completed all training reports, passed interim examination and being registered in the folder of articles of apprenticeship. Several exceptions are given by § 9. For example people, who can proof professionalism twice as long as the training period in the target vocation would have been, can be admitted to the final examination as so called “externals”.

3.7.2. Assessment authority

Interim and final examinations are carried out in form of written, oral and practical assessments. In bigger companies they take place at the training site, in all other cases at the chambers of commerce, industry and trade. The development of examination questions and tasks, the invitation of examiners and the appointment of the examination sites are core responsibilities of the chambers (Exp. Interviews: IHK 2004; Schach 2004). The final examination is a state-wide unified assessment at one specific date carried out twice a year. The examination questions and tasks are kept in sealed envelopes in a safe and are handed to the candidates at the day of the examination. After completion of the assessment the documents are passed to the examination board.

3.7.3. Examination board

The results of the examinations are assessed by the examination board, which consists of representatives of the employers and the employees [trade unions] as well as vocational teachers and trainers. The respective institution nominates the members of the examination board for a period of four or five years. During the examination, the presence of just one member of the examination board is sufficient.

Biermann considers the German assessment procedures being rather bureaucratic with insufficient recognition of work experience (expert interview: Biermann, 2004). In this context the Federal Ministry of Education and Research [BMBF] has recently stated a demand for more flexibility of the assessment procedures. Suggested changes are a reformation of the mentioned examination-regulations-standard towards a stretched final examination with the possibility of partial examinations already during the training period and the possibility to use expert opinions for the assessment of the trainee's performance (BMBF 2004, 12).

3.12. Practice of VET

A modularised structure of VET and its curricular system, like e.g. the "Wet Educatie en Beroepsonderwijs" in the Netherlands provides (Frommberger 1999), cannot be found in Germany. Separate acquisition and certification of partial qualifications on different qualification levels, leading to more horizontal (alternative jobs) and vertical (career) mobility in VET is still not implemented in the German vocational training act [BBiG].

Although the modernisation and modularisation of VET, like the introduction of optional and half-optional elements and the harmonisation with international standards are aims of the BBiG-reformation efforts of the recent government (BMBF 2004, 9, 11, 15), there are still many barriers to overcome. The discussion of the pros and cons of partial certification is on a large scale influenced by a socio-political conflict between economic interests of employers and the unions being suspicious, that the existence of partial certificates will have a negative impact on the wage regulations and will lead to an increasing number of low income jobs (expert interview: Velten, 2004). With respect to this the ministry of education and research leaves no doubt about the adherence to the national vocation concept practised in the dual qualification system (BMBF 2004, 9, 11, 15).

3.8.1. Long term training programs

Long term training programs are the most common form of vocational qualification usually covering a period of three years as a rule. This counts for most occupation profiles being trained in the dual system and in full time vocational schools where a duration of two years is also common. Examples of occupation profiles trained in long term qualification programs lasting only two years are e.g.:

- Assistant in informatics/ economic informatics
- Secretary in health care
- Assistant in domestic economy

Long term school programs can vary federal state specific between 1 to 4 years of duration, with respect to full and part-time forms of education and to the optional association with certain general qualifications. There are some shorter programs, too. For example the training program for becoming nursery assistant or assistant in elderly care nursery lasts only one year in a full time training course.

For the assessment and certification of these programs the regulations described in chapter 3.7 are applied. In the final examinations of vocational school qualification programs certain federal state ministries [e.g. the ministry of cultural affairs and quite often the ministry of health] take over the function of the chambers as assessment authorities. Resulting certificates of this long term programs usually cover the whole spectrum of a fully acknowledged vocation.

Recent developments in the German VET-system offer new possibilities for partial qualification in the course of long term training programs. As a result of modularisation of dual system vocational training in certain occupation profiles partial certificates can be obtained. The participation in a regular long term training program leading to an acknowledged vocation (§25 BBiG) can be an obligate precondition. Where not a precondition the partial certificate can stand alone as a milestone but not as a complete qualification, which is in every case the acknowledged vocation according §25 BBiG. Some examples of such training programs and partial certificates will be given in chapter 4.2.

3.8.2. Short term training programs/ partial certification

Short term training programs leading to certain partial certificates can also be found in the German VET-system:

- A special form of partial vocational qualification primarily for unskilled young people is given by the so called qualification components. These components are little modules with relevance for one or more §25 BBiG acknowledged qualifications with a regular duration of several hundred hours of training. Different components can be composed to more complex vocational training preparation courses. Modules are separately certified and can build an advance for a future fully acknowledged vocational qualification. Examples of qualification components with relevance to the IT and BA sector will be given in chapter 4.2.
- Other forms of training programs mostly short term oriented are qualification measures in the context of on-the-job training and personnel development. Company related training offers are aiming at a task, activity and process oriented further qualification. Employers are interested in the promotion of flexibility and process-competencies of employees at their jobs (bfz 2003/2004).
- In addition to this, there is a big market for informal short-term vocational qualification courses with a variety of training offers.

3.13. Target group policies

In Germany there are approximately 10% per year and age group of young people without any vocational qualification (Pütz 2003, slide 9). They are for several reasons not able to pass a regular vocational certification that is preferably carried out in state-recognised training occupations according §25 of the vocational training act (BBiG). An expert statement of a representative of the regional labour administration pointed out an explicit need for the furtherance of unskilled young people aged under 25 years and an increasing number of job returnees after rehabilitation, lacking an adequate qualification. In most cases the second group needs to change from a former practised job to a new occupation-perspective, but is usually already qualified and experienced in the world of labour (Exp. Interview: labour administration 2004). A representative of a chamber stated, that according to his experience about 1 out of 30 trainees isn't able to follow the theoretical part of VET and certainly would profit from practice accentuating partial qualifications (Exp interview: chamber 2004).

Trying out new and differentiated ways of vocational education is supposed to help reducing the number of people without any qualification. To improve the chances of unskilled youth and other disadvantaged, a general need for modifications within the framework of the Vocational Training Act [BBiG/HwO] is stated (see: BMBF 2004, 6,7).

3.9.1. Unskilled / unemployed young people

Efforts to improve the occupational qualification of young unskilled and unemployed young people are following three closely related approaches:

- the modularisation of VET in fully acknowledged occupations
- the expansion of qualification components in the context of vocational preparation courses
- the adoption of catching up qualifications by on the job training

a) VET modularisation

In this context the modularisation of training courses through curricular – didactic internal differentiation, may offer new possibilities to develop formally acknowledged partial qualifications (Pütz 2003, slide 71). An example for horizontal differentiation of vocational education is given by the integrative model of differentiation of VET for disadvantaged youth in the federal state “Nordrhein-Westfalen” [NRW] as described by R. Enggruber (Enggruber 1999). It specifies a way of curricular differentiation and modularisation in the limits of the vocational concept given by §25 BBiG integrating instruments of the SGB III [§§61, 241ff](see chapter 3.3) as individual furthering options. This model has been field-tested in projects in NRW for the occupation profiles: painter and varnisher, metal worker in construction design, plumber and clerk. After a minimum of 2 years of training a certain certificate is accrediting all partial qualifications acquired until then. This certificate shall enable and encourage young people for a later reengagement in full qualification or at least being useful on the labour market because of the transparency of the acquired partial qualifications (Enggruber 1999, 16).

b) Qualification components

Qualification components are defined in substance, activity oriented training modules who serve the curricular structuring of qualification processes and are used for the vocational furthering of disadvantaged. Although the concept of qualification components is still developing with regard to their potential functions as parts of the whole VET, they are used for formal qualification in the context of vocational education preparation measures (www.bibb.de/de/print/6093.htm).

The recent government runs a furtherance-program named “promotion of competencies”, which supports projects concerned with the development of qualification components. Future reform efforts will introduce this furthering area-wide to all vocational preparation measures according the SGB III (BMBF 2004, 7,8). As a consequence of this intention the German system of vocational rehabilitation presumably is going to become modularised.

The federal institute of vocational education [BIBB] has been appointed to establish a documentation-centre (<http://www.good-practice.de>) for information-transfer and networking purposes in the field of furthering of disadvantaged. The “Good-Practice-Centre” offers an online database in which by now 141 qualification components have been taken up.

A standardised “certificate about job related qualifications” has already been introduced in November 2000 (Gutschow 2001). All partial qualifications including those acquired in the form of qualification components can be attested on the following conditions:

- The assigned qualification is related to an occupation profile according §25 BbIG.
- The qualification content is described in the categories of knowledge and skills:
- The duration of the qualification measure is specified.

c) Catching up vocational qualifications on the job

In addition to the possibilities of partial certification of certain VET-modules or qualification components, a potential of catching up vocational qualifications on the job for unskilled young people is given by the above mentioned “certificate about job related qualifications”. A new

development is the “ Qualification Passport ” (<http://www.qualipass.de>), a personal document for the collection of individual job related qualifications.

Formal accreditation can be given by certificates about the independent and self dependent performance of qualifying vocational tasks. The certificate or pass collects partial qualifications like a portfolio. Acknowledgement of this instrument is bound to a target vocation in the limits of the BBiG (see: Gutschow 2001 and <http://www.qualipass.de/information/pass/index.html>).

If respective agreements with the competent bodies about the modules and their contents are made, the module-certificates can be accepted by the examination boards as proofs of existing qualifications. So the admission to the so called “Externenprüfung” [§ 40.2 BBiG] can be given after a shorter period of proved professionalism then twice as long as the training period in the target vocation would have been (see chapter 3.7). This opens access to a full vocational certificate for young people who acquired their qualifications in several short term training programs or on the job. The chamber of commerce and industry in Berlin and the chamber of trade in the region “Ostthüringen” did make such agreements in the context of pilot projects.

3.9.2. People with disabilities

For young people with disabilities the training and assessment requirements of formally assigned vocational qualifications are often too high (expert interview: Velten, 2004). According §48b BBiG the training-content of vocational education for people with disabilities can diverge from the content of §25 BBiG acknowledged vocations in consideration of the actual data and developments on the general labour-market. Here legislation points out a way for the development of partial certifications as far as needs of the job market can be met. On the regional level chambers have the ability to accredit these partial qualifications (expert interviews: Velten, 2004, Fürsich, 2004).

Examples of formal partial certificates referring to §48 BBiG or §42b HwO are:

- Office assistant
- Printout producer
- Bibliopegist
- Skilled worker (motorcar)
- Skilled worker (metal)
- Skilled worker (metal construction)
- Skilled worker (recycling)
- Expert assistant in cleaning technology (IFK 2003)

After failing theoretical assessment twice the chambers can formally acknowledge the practical skills of the apprentice. In these cases the training concludes with the so called “kleiner Gehilfen Brief” [little subworker certificate]. However these certificates are not much in demand at the labour market.

4. IT AND BA CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Computer-technology has already invaded all spheres of economic and social life. According the characteristic „Megatrend“ of increasing globalisation and internationalisation of all basic-economic processes, beside other elements of general education like culture-techniques [reading, writing, calculating] and knowledge in foreign languages and cultures, IT and media-competence has become a key-competence of vocational qualification in many occupation sectors (see: Abicht 2002, 22).

Especially the sectors of information technology [IT] and business administration [BA] depend on respectively qualified staff. The occupations in these vocational activity fields need to adapt to

the fast developments of the new media landscape. As a consequence several new and changing occupation profiles have been developed in the recent years in both sectors.

4.1. Occupation profiles

4.1.1. Occupation profiles in the IT-sector

The following occupation profiles [respectively fully acknowledged occupations by the BbiG] exist in the IT-sector. Most of them have been developed in the years since 1997. Although the English translation of the occupations is made carefully, it may be endangered to be misleading in some cases. To prevent this, the German terms are written in brackets in the following chapters.

- Electronic-technician for IT-systems [IT-Systemelektroniker(in)]
- Skilled worker in informatics [Informatiker(in)]
- Expert in informatics [Fachinformatiker(in)]
 - Application development
 - System-integration
- Assistant in informatics [Informatikassistent(in)]
- Assistant in data-technology [Datentechnische(r) Assistent(in)]
- Media-Designer image and sound [Mediengestalter(in) Bild und Ton]
- Movie- and videoeditor [Film- und Videoeditor(in)]
- Media-Designer for digital- and printmedia [Mediengestalter(in) für Digital- und Printmedien]
- Skilled worker in system-informatics [Systeminformatiker (in)]

Occupation profiles with overlap to the BA-sector are:

- IT-System businessman/ woman [IT-Systemkaufmann (-kauffrau)]
- Businessman/ woman in informatics [Informatikkaufmann (-kauffrau)]

4.1.2. Occupation profiles in the BA-sector

The following occupation profiles [respectively fully acknowledged occupations by the BBiG] are only a small selection of occupations in the BA-sector where new media competencies are most relevant:

- Businessman/ woman in office affairs / clerk [Bürokaufmann (-kauffrau)]
- Businessman/ woman in office-communication [Kaufmann (-Kauffrau) für Bürokommunikation]
- Businessman/ woman in audio-visual media [Kaufmann/-frau für audiovisuelle Medien]
- Insurance Salesman/ woman [Versicherungskaufmann (-kauffrau)]
- Travel agent [Reiseverkehrskaufmann (-kauffrau)]
- Businessman /woman for investment-funds [Investmentfondkaufmann (-kauffrau)]
- Administrative officer [Verwaltungsfachangestellte/r]
- Management assistant [Managementassistent/-in]
- Europe secretary [Europasekretär/in]

4.2. Examples of partial certification at lower or medium educational level

4.2.1. Partial certification structuring or substituting fully acknowledged VET

Partial certification structuring or substituting fully acknowledged VET can only be found in the vocational sector of business administration.

- a) Basics in Office-keeping [Bürowirtschaftliche Grundlagen] is a partial qualification deriving from the occupation profile of businessman / woman in office affairs / clerk [Bürokaufmann –kauffrau].

The target group is apprentices. It is oriented at the training regulations and common skeleton curriculum of the acknowledged occupation. The achievement of this partial qualification is bound to the precondition of participating in a regular acknowledged vocational education (§25 BBiG). As a part of a dual system vocational education it has to be acquired during the training-process, without defined duration. Assessments are made on the basis of observation of the teachers and/or trainers during the training, not by examinations. The vocational education of a businessman/ woman in office affairs/ clerk [Bürokaufmann –kauffrau] lasts three years as a rule.

This partial certification has been developed in the course of the six projects “differentiation of vocational training- Training-consensus NRW” according to the principles of task- and department-orientation (www.good-practice.de/qb).

Similar partial certifications in the field of Business administration deriving from the “Training-consensus NRW” are:

- Personal economics [Personalwirtschaft]
- Operational accountancy [Betriebliches Rechnungswesen]
- Marketing/ sales economics [Absatzwirtschaft]
- Purchase and materials logistics [Beschaffung und Materialwirtschaft]

- b) Administration / Office [Verwaltung/ Büro] is a partial qualification deriving from the occupation profiles of Businessman / woman in office affairs / clerk [Bürokaufmann (-kauffrau)] or Businessman /woman in office-communication [Kaufmann (-Kaufrau) für Bürokommunikation].

The target group of this partial certification are unskilled or semi-skilled unemployed and other trainees. The training isn't bound to BBiG related access restrictions because of its implementation on the basis of a probationer-contract. The achievement of the certificate depends on regular presence and the assessment of performance during the training. The training lasts 6 to 12 months. The certificate is chargeable for a full VET, attending the vocational school is possible, too.

This partial certification originates from the Project “TANJA”, which has been concerned with the development of partial qualifications serving needs of the labour market. The results of the project are meant as a pragmatic contribution to the reduction of unemployment of young people (www.good-practice.de/qb).

Similar partial certifications in the field of Business administration deriving from the “TANJA” project are:

- Trade/ Selling [Handel/ Verkauf]
- Stock keeping/ Lift-truck-driver [Lagerwirtschaft/ Staplerfahrer/-in]

4.2.2. Partial certification on the basis of qualification components

Partial certification on the basis of qualification components can be found in both sectors BA as well as IT. Qualification components describe smaller training modules which are commonly used in measures of vocational education preparation for disadvantaged young people. The INKA III projects [INnovative Konzepte in der Ausbildungsvorbereitung benachteiligter Jugendlicher] has been engaged in developing standardised requirements to content and form

of qualification components. The following table shows the structure and elements of a qualification component by the example of “stock-keeping”:

Title	Stock-keeping
Teaching and learning objectives	Independent reception and inspection of goods, skilful storage and distribution of goods
Requirements	Industrial safety
Duration of the qualification component	80 hours
Elements	Knowledge and skills
1. Goods receipt/ inspection 2. Storage of goods 3. Stock care 4. Distribution of goods	4. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listing of goods issue • Skilful package of goods • Dispatch of goods • Completing forms
Final task	Practical task
	Technical theory General theory 1 1/2 h

Table 2: Structure of a qualification component considering “stock-keeping” as example (acc. www.inbas.de)

At present 141 qualification components in different vocational sectors are described as examples of good practice for the promotion of disadvantaged young people. The following tables name some of the examples collected in the good-practice database (www.good-practice.de/bbigbausteine).

Examples of qualification components in the BA-sector are:

Name of the qualification component	Related occupational profile(s)
Sales-Talks [Verkaufsgespräche]	Businessman /woman in retail trade [Einzelhandelskaufmann/ kauffrau]
Communication [Kommunikation]	Businessman /woman in office-communication [Kaufmann (-Kauffrau) für Bürokommunikation]
Service-Occupations [Dienstleistungsberufe]	Hairdresser [Friseur]/ Businessman /woman in office-communication [Kaufmann (-Kauffrau) für Bürokommunikation]/ Seller [Verkäufer]
Office machines [Büromaschinen]	Businessman /woman in office-communication [Kaufmann (-Kauffrau) für Bürokommunikation]

Examples of qualification components in the IT-sector are:

Name of the qualification component	Related occupational profile(s)
HTML-Programming [HTML-Programmierung]	Electronic-technician for IT-systems [IT-Systemelektroniker(in)]
Image-Processing [Bildbearbeitung]	Media-Designer for digital- and print-media [Mediengestalter(in) für Digital- und Printmedien]
Windows 2000 in networks [Windows 2000 im Netzwerk]	Expert in informatics [Fachinformatiker(in)]
IT-Office applications [IT-Office Anwendungen]	Expert in informatics [Fachinformatiker(in)]/ IT-System businessman/ woman [IT-Systemkaufmann (-kauffrau)]/ Businessman/ woman in informatics [Informatikkaufmann (-kauffrau)]

The presented qualification components are supposed to be recorded in the “certificate about job related qualifications” or the “Qualification Passport” (see chapter 3.9). They are acknowledged advances for future vocational education and training programs and may also serve as a first qualification for an occupation in the field of BA or IT.

4.2.3. Other forms of partial certification

Partial certification with an overlapping focus on basic competencies for different kinds of computer users is given by the European computer driving license [ECDL]. It has a structure of seven separately assessed modules and leads to a European-wide acknowledged certificate on two qualification levels [ECDL and ECDL start] (http://www.ecdl.de/ecdl/index_1024.php). The ECDL turns out to be very useful as a basic qualification for computer users of different occupations in the sectors of IT and business administration and seems to develop to a highly requested qualification at the labour market for people with disabilities (Exp. interview: Strassmann 2004).

4.3. Chances at the labour market

The overall prognosis for the German labour market isn't too optimistic. The rate of unemployment will presumably not fall below the mark of four million this year (<http://www.tagesschau.de>, 2004). While after an interim breakdown on the labour market for IT-staff the situation meanwhile seems to ease up, the perspectives for the BA-sector stay difficult. In the city of Bochum only one out of seven applicants with reduced certificates acc. §48 BbIG found a job in the BA-sector (expert interview: Velten, 2004).

Simple tasks seem to vanish more and more from the labour market because of the increasing automatisisation of easy auxiliary-jobs (Exp. Interview: Fürsich 2004). Other reasons may be, that simple task nowadays are changing quite fast and require more specific qualification then they did in the past (Abicht 2002, 24). This hints at the development of new simple occupations with better chances at the labour market.

In the IT-Sector the following branches have been identified as prospective growing markets:

- E-Learning [Software]
- E-Business [content management/ web-workflow]
- Sound-Graphic-coupling of informations
- Application Service Providing through convergent networks which means fusion of TV, Internet, Mobile-phone technology, etc (Abicht 2002, 28-32)

The presumed growing need for IT and multimedia qualifications show a trend for more differentiated and in detail more specific qualifications then acknowledged IT-occupations can offer (Abicht 2002, 26). On the other hand employers are more and more looking for

“Allrounders” who are skilled in more than one key qualification (Exp. Interview: Fürsich 2004). According to the economic needs in modern and complex work environments the simple tasks will have to transform into qualified work. The importance of marks is receding, practical qualification and personal interests are gaining importance (bfz 2003/2004).

To raise employment opportunities for less qualified people the need for more upward mobility in the sense of selective qualification and alternating mobility through concepts of Life-long-learning is obvious. This is probably achievable through the involvement of the outlined target group in short, modular designed, specifically oriented at concrete demands and generally in-company qualifications. In principle, possible new occupation fields for less qualified people and the related demand for qualification can develop in every branch (Abicht 2002, 24). There seems to be an overall need for employees with general media related basic-knowledge and skills. These are: General knowledge about hard- and software, allround-knowledge about peripheral-devices, browsers, operation-systems and databases, about marketable applications and their usability as well as knowledge about the internet and the related technologies. In addition to this a growing demand for superordinated skills and qualifications in several personality oriented competence sectors like innovation- method-, social-, and self-competencies can be stated in the modern work environments. (Abicht 2002, 38-39)

With respect to the above said the legislative reform efforts of the German VET-system resulting e.g. in the implementation of partial certification in the form of qualification components as well as the growing dissemination of the ECDL are promising first steps for the improvement of employment chances for disadvantaged people. Additional concepts of Life-Long-Learning and catching up vocational qualifications on the job which are implemented with the introduction of the “Qualification Passport” seem to be very helpful tools, too.

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- (http://www.tagesschau.de/aktuell/meldungen/0,1185,OID3250070_TYP6_THE_NAVSPM1_RE_F1_BAB,00.html), (May, 2004), presentation of the statistic report of unemployment of April 2004

Expert-Interviews:

Expert-Interview with D. Velten, teacher at „Werner Richard Berufskolleg“, Wetter/ Volmarstein, March 8th 2004

Expert-Interview with I. Strassmann, trainer at „Berufsbildungswerk“ of ESV, responsibilities: qualifications in business/-man/-woman in health care service and ECDL, Wetter/ Volmarstein, March 10th 2004

Expert-Interview with T. Fürsich, teacher at „Werner Richard Berufskolleg“, Wetter/ Volmarstein, March 31th 2004

Expert-Interview with A. Schach, training officer for vocational training of business/-men/-women at „Berufsbildungswerk“ of ESV, Wetter/ Volmarstein, April 26th 2004

Expert-Interview with a representative of the regional labour administration, Dortmund, April 27th 2004

Expert-Interview with a representative of a regional chamber of industry and commerce, May 5th 2004

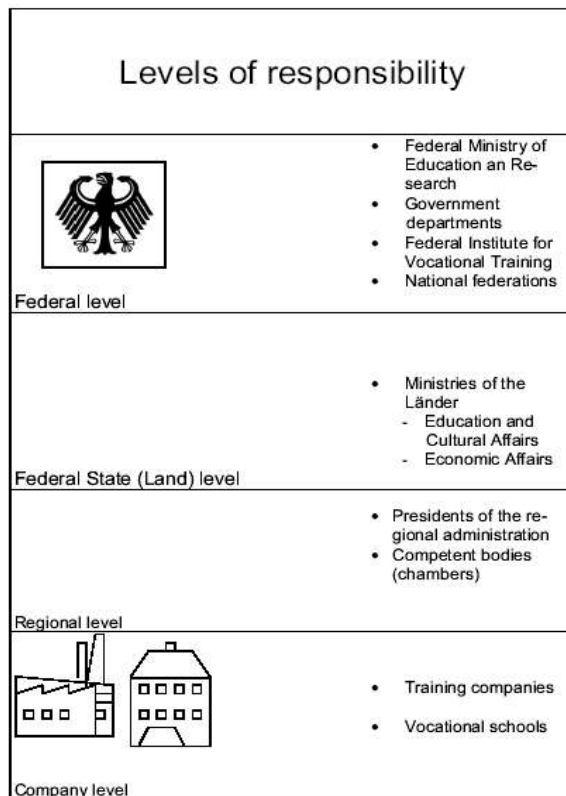
Expert-Interview with Prof. Dr. Biermann, faculty of rehabilitation-science, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation at the university of Dortmund, Dortmund, June 17th 2004

6. APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Institutional levels of responsibility

Appendix 2: The BIBB Board

Folie 24



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Fig. 1: Institutional levels of responsibility (Pütz 2003, slide 24)

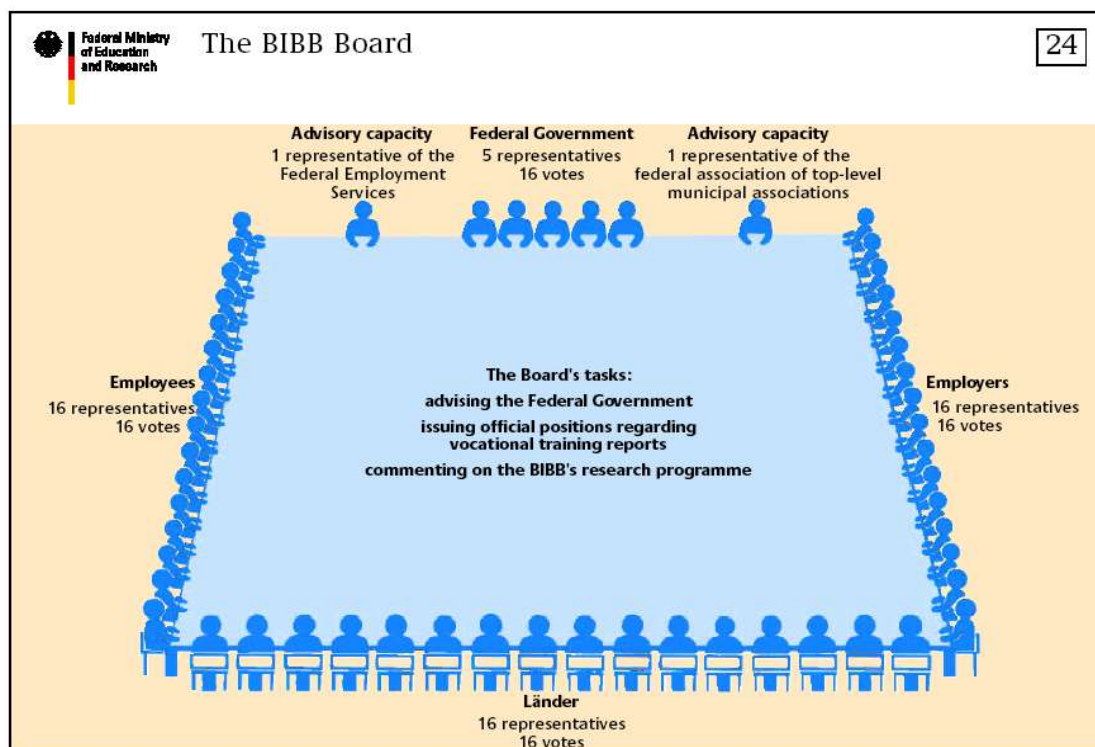


Fig. 2: The BIBB [Federal Institute for Vocational Training] Board (BMBF 2003, slide 24)

THE NETHERLANDS

1. INTRODUCTION

The information in this chapter is based on information retrieved from the Internet, interviews and consultations with field experts and observation of practice. An important source of information about the educational system in the Netherlands is www.eurydice.org (information network on education in Europe) and www.dutch-vet.nl (concerning the Dutch VET sector).

2. THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE NETHERLANDS

"Schools dispute" and the "Pacification"

The first piece of educational legislation in the Netherlands, the Elementary Education Act, was passed in 1801. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, elementary schools were divided into public schools funded by the government and private schools maintained from private sources. The unequal treatment of public and private education led to the "schools dispute", a political battle to achieve complete equality under the law for both types of school. Catholics and Protestants wanted their own schools with a pronounced Roman Catholic or Protestant stamp but with equal state funding. The Liberals too wanted the freedom of education guaranteed by the Constitution to be reflected in equal financial treatment of public and private schools. This was finally achieved in the 1917 Constitution, in what is known as the "Pacification of 1917".

After 1917, the principle of financial equality was extended to secondary and higher education. There are now nearly twice as many privately run as publicly run schools.

The history of compulsory education

The first legislation making education compulsory was passed in 1900. It prescribed 6 years of compulsory education (between the ages of 6 and 12). The Act was repeatedly amended and eventually replaced by the Compulsory Education Act 1969.

The obligation to attend school is laid down in the Compulsory Education Act 1969. Every child must attend school full time from the first school day of the month following its fifth birthday; in fact, however, nearly all children attend school from the age of four. Children must attend school full time for 12 full school years and, in any event, until the end of the school year in which they turn 16. Young people are then required to attend an institution providing courses for this purpose for two days a week for another year. Those who have a practical training contract in a particular sector of employment attend classes one day a week on a day release basis and work the rest of the week.

Monitoring early school leavers

If a child of compulsory school age is not enrolled at a school or stays away from school without permission, the parents can be fined. An alternative measure is usually imposed instead. For pupils aged 14 and over who are experiencing problems with full-time education, a special programme can be devised combining general education with some form of light work that is carried out in conjunction with their school work. This is intended for a small group of pupils only, who cannot be helped in any other way.

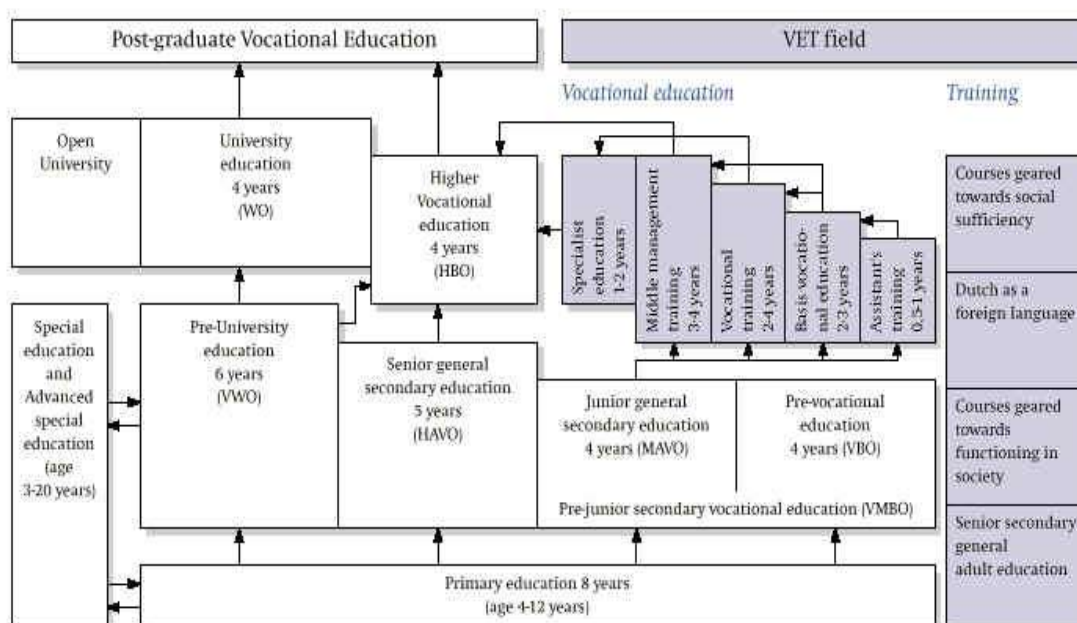
Since 1995 the municipal authorities have been responsible for registering early school leavers under the age of 23 and coordinating regional policy on this matter. In 2001 the Regional Registration and Coordination (Early School Leavers) Bill was adopted by parliament. This bill contains amendments to educational legislation designed to prevent and tackle early school leaving in ordinary and special secondary schools, secondary vocational education and adult general secondary education. The municipal authorities will in future be responsible for ensuring an integrated approach to the issue of early school leaving. Schools and colleges will be required to report all cases up to the age of 23, i.e. beyond school-leaving age. The main aim is for all young people to leave school with a basic qualification.

At present, there is no central system for monitoring whether all children who are able to attend school are actually doing so, since the municipal authorities are responsible for checking compliance with the Compulsory Education Act. From 2004, a school attendance monitor will be introduced containing information from the municipalities about compliance with the Act. It will then be possible to find out whether every child who should be attending school is actually doing so.

The structure of the Dutch educational system has been changing regularly. A schema of the present structure is presented below. After the figure, an explanation of the different levels is given.

Figure 1

Source: www.dutch-vet.nl



2.1. Initial education

Initial or primary education is meant for children from four to twelve years old. The end terms of primary education are for all children who are not attending special education, the same. The growth of the knowledge and skills is scored during the eight years and will influence the advice the schools present to an individual pupil, concerning the best school to go to after primary education. In most cases the pupil will have to follow this advice.

4.4. Secondary education

Secondary education consists of VBO (pre-vocational education), MAVO (junior general secondary education), HAVO (senior general education) and VWO (pre-university education).

- Those with a VBO Diploma can then go on to the MBO. The MAVO prepares for senior secondary vocational education (MBO).
- HAVO prepares for higher professional education (HBO). Students go on to the VWO or choose senior secondary vocational training instead of higher professional education.

VWO prepares for university studies, but many pupils continue in HBO. There are 3 kinds of VWO Certificates: Atheneum, Gymnasium and Unified VWO Certificate.

4.5. Higher education

The Netherlands higher education system is a binary system, composed of university education (WO – Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs) and professional higher education (HBO – Hoger Beroepsonderwijs).

In addition, there is the Open University (OU – Open Universiteit) which offers fully recognized university degree programmes through distance education.

International education (IO – Internationaal Onderwijs), generally conducted in English, is mainly designed to meet the needs of foreign students. Since 1991, university research schools have been founded to cater for young researchers and to centralize research activities.

5. THE VET & CERTIFICATION SYSTEM IN THE NETHERLANDS

The Dutch vocational education system can be subdivided into three levels. All of these levels are represented in figure 1 in paragraph 2.0. The levels are:

- Pre-junior Secondary Vocational Education (VMBO), preparatory or primary level;
- Vocational education & training (MBO), intermediate or secondary level; Prevocational education is part of the secondary education itself, which means that VBO-curricula is integrated in curricula of MBO;
- Higher vocational education (HBO); This is the vocational equivalent to university education

PACE is directed at the VET system (Vocational Education & Training and adult education), which covers vocational education for the age of 16 years and older. In figure 1 the educational types shown in colour represent VET.

VET education offers adults courses focusing on social sufficiency and citizenship, and the mastery of Dutch as a second language. In addition, VET education offers courses for adults in general secondary education.

3.1. Historical development

Starting with the 1999-2000 school year, a major restructuring of secondary vocational and general secondary education was implemented. These changes mainly affect VBO, the last two years of MAVO, the last two years of HAVO and the last three years of VWO.

In this school year, 1999-2000, MAVO and MBO have been officially classified in the same category of education known as VMBO (Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs) or preparatory secondary vocational education.

Depending on interest and capacity, pupils can choose from one of four learning tracks or routes:

- the theoretical route granting admission to long MBO or HAVO;
- the vocationally-oriented route granting admission to long training in secondary vocational education (MBO) or to short training programmes;
- a mixed educational route with a combination of general subjects and a vocationally-oriented subject; and
- a professional practice route, oriented towards the labour market and aimed at a specific group for which VMBO is the last educational stage.

An important result of the recent educational reforms regarding VMBO, HAVO and VWO is that pupils in the last two years of VMBO, the last two years of HAVO and the last three years of VWO have to complete the curriculum requirements for one of four subject clusters. VMBO pupils can choose between Technology, Health and Personal Care and Welfare, Economics and Agriculture. HAVO and VWO pupils can choose between Nature and Technology, Nature and Health, Economics and Society and Culture and Society.

Beginning in January 1997, a new national qualification framework for adult and vocational education (beroepsonderwijs) went into effect with four levels of training and two learning paths. This new system incorporates the senior secondary vocational educational courses (MBO) and apprenticeship training courses (leerlingwezen) that had existed before. Under the new system, each level of qualification corresponds to a different type of course:

- assistentopleiding, training to assistant level lasting 6 months to 1 year,
- basisberoepsopleiding, basic vocational training (2-3 years),
- vakopleiding, professional training (2-4 years) and
- at level 4, middle-management training (3-4 years) and specialist training (1-2 years). Students can take these courses consecutively, the Diploma for one course serving to gain entry to the next.

3.2. Legal framework (www.eurydice.org)

3.2.1. The right to education

One of the key features of the Dutch education system, guaranteed under article 23 of the Constitution, is freedom of education, i.e. the freedom to found schools (freedom of establishment), to organise the teaching in schools (freedom of organisation of teaching) and to determine the principles on which they are based (freedom of conviction). People have the right to found schools and to provide teaching based on religious, ideological or educational beliefs. As a result there are both publicly run and privately run schools in the Netherlands.

Publicly run schools:

- are open to all children regardless of religion or outlook;
- are generally subject to public law;
- are governed by the municipal council or by a public legal entity or foundation set up by the council;
- provide education on behalf of the state.

Some publicly run schools base their teaching on specific educational ideas, such as the Montessori, Jena Plan or Dalton method.

Privately run schools:

- are subject to private law and are state-funded although not set up by the state;
- are governed by the board of the association or foundation that set them up;
- base their teaching on religious or ideological beliefs; they include Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Hindustani and anthroposophic schools;
- can refuse to admit pupils whose parents do not subscribe to the belief or ideology on which the school's teaching is based.

Some private schools base their teaching on specific educational ideas, such as the Montessori, Jena Plan or Dalton method. Some 70% of pupils attend privately run schools.

The freedom to organise teaching means that private schools are free to determine what is taught and how. This freedom is however limited by the qualitative standards set by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in educational legislation. These standards, which apply to both public and private education, prescribe:

- the subjects to be studied,
- the attainment targets or examination syllabuses and
- the content of national examinations,
- the number of teaching periods per year,
- the qualifications which teachers are required to have,
- giving parents and pupils a say in school matters,
- planning and reporting obligations, and so on.

3.2.2. *The Adult & Vocational Education Act (WEB)*

Since 1996, the vocational education and adult education sector has been organised within the framework of the Adult & Vocational Education Act (WEB). The new structure has brought with it major changes and responsibilities of teaching institutions, national bodies for vocational education and independent examination bodies.

The objectives of this Act are:

- to improve the quality of education;
- to strengthen the ties with the labour market;
- to introduce a coherent qualification structure;
- to increase retention rates.

Broadly speaking the effects brought about by the WEB on the sector are:

- increase in scale and increased autonomy of teaching institutions;
- integration of previously separated work types in vocational education and training;
- new forms of co-operation between education and business and industry;
- educational innovation through the development of didactic methods such as independent and problem-solving learning, combined with the use of information and communication technology in the teaching process;
- the provision of tailor-made work to individual participants by means of a flexible range of courses, combined with intensive supervision.

3.3. *Financial framework (www.eurydice.org)*

The Constitution places public and private schools on an equal financial footing. This means that government expenditure on public education must be matched by spending on private education. The conditions which private schools must satisfy in order to qualify for funding are laid down by law.

3.4. Organisations

3.4.1. Accreditation bodies

The involvement of business and industry in the content of vocational programmes is prominent. The content of every vocational programme is laid down in a way, which guarantees support for the programme from business and industry, government and education. Programme content is determined in four stages:

- The social partners (employers and employees) in a particular sector submit the job profiles relevant to the programme. Job profiles are descriptions of the core tasks of a job or position and the related skills. These profiles may not be limited in scope for a specific position. They must be representative for an entire sector or branch.
- The national bodies for vocational training (business and industry and education) then develop the qualifications for the programme. Social and cultural qualifications are added to the job profiles together with intake profiles for higher education. As a consequence, the programme meets the statutory requirement for multiple qualification: for the labour market, for progression and for citizenship.
- Subsequently the Minister of Education, Culture and Sciences (the government) sets the attainment targets - the requirements that a participant must fulfil at the end of the programme. The Minister also decides which components of the programme will be subjected to external, independent examination. He then places the programme in the Central Register of Vocational Training Programmes. This register contains all approved programmes, the institutions where they are provided, and the authorised examining bodies available for providing an independent assessment of the examinations.
- The final step is for the colleges to develop their curricula, on the basis of the predetermined attainment targets. In this process, they combine forces in sector groups, which with professional support develop and produce teaching plans and new didactic concepts. In this process, colleges are allowed to use up to 20 percent of the length of the programme for adding elements to the course, which are specific to the sector, the region or the college.

Throughout this process, employers and employees, government and educational authorities are involved in developing the programmes at moments relevant to their competences. Where necessary, they sit at the negotiating table as equal partners. This consensus model, typical of the Dutch way of working, does take a considerable amount of time. From start to finish, the process takes on average about three years.

The procedure described above is a top down approach. However, the other way around is also possible. A teacher of AOC-Heerlen (paragraph 3.4.3.) told they themselves wrote a new training program, which is send for approval to the Ministry of Education.

3.4.2. National bodies

The 22 national bodies for vocational training (lob's) are centres of knowledge and expertise in relation to vocational courses organised for individual sectors or job categories. The employers' and employees' organisations from the sector (in a number of cases together with the vocational education bodies relevant to the sector) form the governing boards of the national bodies.

Their statutory tasks are:

- to develop and maintain the qualification structure for vocational education;
- to guarantee a sufficient number of placement addresses and to promote the quality of these placements;
- to assess and accredit companies and organisations providing work experience;
- to identify those components of vocational courses in which the quality of the examinations must be assessed by an external, independent body.

The national bodies are responsible for the content of secondary vocational education and they use comparable methods to set up qualifications and certifications. ECABO is the body dealing with Business Administration and IT, especially at the lower and middle level of education.

In Appendix 1 all the Dutch national bodies are listed.

National body for vocational training: ECABO

As a National Body for Vocational Education in the Netherlands, ECABO is responsible for the content of senior secondary vocational education, in eight categories: secretarial work, company administration, commercial work, logistics, automation, legal work, information services and security.

Vocational education is faced with the challenge of keeping up with the changing demands of the labour market. ECABO makes a contribution to this objective, in three ways:

- As the National Body for Vocational Education, ECABO draws up the attainment targets for examinations in senior secondary vocational education (MBO) courses. The organisation constantly monitors developments on the labour market, both via contacts with individual companies, and via desk research. The composition of the Governing Board of ECABO reflects the organisation's function as a bridge between education and the labour market. The Board consists of representatives of employers' organisations, employees' organisations and vocational education.
- ECABO recruits and approves apprenticeship businesses for professional practice training.
- ECABO evaluates the examinations set by educational institutions. ECABO also plays a key role in the development of a national Examination Register for MBO education.

3.4.3. Training providers

In the VET sector, the following schools and institutes offer courses:

Regional vocational education & training centres (roc's)

The Adult & Vocational Education Act (the WEB) provides the 46 regional vocational education & training centres (roc's) with the statutory duty to offer vocational education in three sectors: Engineering and Technology, Economics and Health & Social Care, and to offer adult education. In addition they carry out contract activities i.e. work for third parties which are not part of their statutory duties, and which are not financed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences (OC&W).

Agricultural vocational education and training centres (aoc's) and centres for innovation and practice

The 18 agricultural vocational education & training centres (aoc's) and the three innovation and practical centres (ipc's) provide primary and secondary agricultural vocational education, in the sectors agriculture, natural environment and food technology. These institutions are also subject to the Adult & Vocational Education Act. They are financed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries.

Sector specific colleges

The 13 specialised colleges provide vocational courses for specific sectors. They are financed by the Ministry of OC&W, if they can demonstrate that their programmes cannot be efficiently provided within an roc. Examples of sectors with specialised colleges are the graphics industry, butchers, painting and decorating, train drivers, the fishing sector, shipping and transport, joinery and fine mechanical engineering.

Private institutions

- a) Private institutes, members of PAEPON (platform for private teaching institutions)
Private teaching institutions are commercial institutions, which provide courses in vocational education and training. They too must comply with the requirements laid

down in the WEB Act; they have the same rights as other institutions, but are not funded by the government.

b) Other private institutions.

3.4.4. Umbrella organisations dealing with VET

The VET sector features a number of umbrella organisations, which promote the interests of their members:

- The Bve (VET) Council (association of VET-colleges). Since 1996, 9 previously independent organisations of colleges have joined forces in the Bve Council. As employers' organisation, the tasks of the Council are to promote the collective interests of the affiliated institutions, to provide services on behalf of the members, and to support educational innovation. The Bve Council covers 18 sector groups, within which colleges develop curricula and new teaching concepts, with professional backup.
- The AOC Council (association of agricultural colleges);
- PAEPON (platform for private teaching institutions);
- Colo (association of national bodies for vocational training). Since 1954 Colo has been the umbrella organisation for the national bodies. Since 1996 Colo has been an association, which promotes the common interests of its members, both nationally and internationally. Besides this promotional task, central to the activities of Colo are the provision of services to members and third parties, determining collective conditions of employment for the national bodies, and quality assurance.
- The JongerenOrganisatieBeroepsonderwijs (association of young people in vocational education).

3.5. Qualification systems

The qualification structure in vocational education & training provides an idea of the requirements, which a participant must fulfil at the end of a vocational course, and provides a coherent structure of all qualifications available within vocational education. The qualification structure for vocational education has four levels. These levels are parallel to the European (SEDOC) level classification. Each level has an accompanying course provision.

The attainment targets for the individual student's course describe what a MBO student is required to learn. These attainments targets outline the knowledge, skills and attitudes expected by the labour market. The attainment targets are ordered in a thoroughly worked out framework known as the National Qualification Structure. This structure consists of partial qualifications, each of which describes a course component. Every MBO course is based on a vocational qualification, within which certain partial qualifications are compulsory, whilst others can be freely chosen from a predetermined selection, for each specific course.

Partial qualifications may recur in various courses, because many of the subjects are applicable for a whole range of groups of professionals.

The introduction of the National Qualification Structure should avoid duplication, and should assure that it is clear what a MBO student can do and should know. Field research like interviews with teachers may tell more about the effects of the National Qualification Structure in practice.

3.5.1. Two education and training pathways: college-based route and a work-based route

In addition, vocational education offers a choice between two education and training pathways: a full-time college-based route (including traineeships) and a work-based route (apprenticeships). The main characteristic difference between these routes is the position occupied by the practice component of the programme. The college-based route is in the form of full daytime education

including traineeships. Here, the practice component occupies a minimum of 20 percent and a maximum of 60 percent of the period of study. Typical of the work-based route is the component of learning on the job, in which the practice component consists of 60 percent or more of the period of study.

Not every type of course can be followed along both routes. Of the 700 courses available in vocational education, approximately half are available in both routes.

3.5.2. The four levels of qualification in vocational education and related courses

Level 1: carrying out simple practical tasks.

This objective relates to the training of assistants, it lasts between six months and one year, and does not require entrance qualifications. This training programme fulfils the labour market requirement for certificate holders at level one, and offers participants who are unable to obtain an initial qualification the opportunity of joining the labour market as a qualified employee. Progression routes: to basic vocational education.

Level 2: carrying out practical tasks.

This is the basic vocational qualification route that lasts between two and three years, and which does not require entrance requirements either. At this level, the minimum initial qualification must be achieved. Progression routes: to vocational education.

Level 3: carrying out tasks, fully independently.

This relates to a vocational programme which lasts between two and four years, and which according to law may be started by those who have a certificate of pre-vocational education, or a transition certificate to class 4 of senior general secondary education. Progression routes: to middle management training and specialist training.

Level 4: carrying out tasks of a broad or specialist nature, fully independently

Broad professional deployment requires middle management training, which lasts between three and four years. According to law this type of training is open to those who have a certificate of pre-vocational education, or a transition certificate to class 4 of senior general secondary education, or a vocational certificate. Progression routes: to higher education.

Specialisation requires a specialist-training programme, which lasts between one and two years and which can be started by those who have of a vocational training certificate. Progression routes: sometimes to higher education (in certain sectors this level is the highest level that can be achieved).

3.5.3. The qualification structure for adult education

The qualification structure for adult education describes the coherent group of competences that participants can achieve through training. 'Competences' are a collective term for the knowledge, skills and understanding, which participants can master through training. Examples of competences are mastery of Dutch as a first or second language (literacy), elementary numeracy skills and empowering a participant to enter a vocational course or university. The qualification structure for adult education has six levels of competence, besides five levels of competence for mastery of Dutch as a second language. The six educational competence levels are:

Level 1: offers elementary skills for general functioning in society. These are a pre-requisite for progression to a higher level in education.

Level 2: enables the participant to follow assistants training in vocational education, or low level job training in the workplace, as well as comparable training programmes for the unemployed.

Level 3: enables the participant to follow basic vocational training in vocational education, or comparable training programmes in companies and for the unemployed.

Level 4: is equivalent to junior secondary general secondary education, and grants access to vocational courses and middle management courses in vocational education.

Level 5: is equivalent to the level of senior general secondary education, and grants access to higher education.

Level 6: is equivalent to the level of pre-university education, and grants access to university education.

3.5.4. Work experience as a compulsory component of vocational education

The learning of a profession in practice, known as professional practical training (PPT) in the Adult & Vocational Education Act, is a vital component of vocational education. The Act requires an approved period of work placement for obtaining a certificate. By making work experience compulsory, the Act aims to guarantee the relevance of the courses to practice, and thus strengthen the ties between education and the labour market.

The national bodies for vocational training and the colleges have joint responsibility for this work experience. The national bodies ensure that approved learning establishments offer sufficient good quality placements. The search for good placements is not limited to the Netherlands. The majority of national bodies for vocational training also have foreign learning establishments in their registers. A number of national bodies have developed tools for the 'remote' accreditation of foreign work placement addresses.

The colleges are required to offer courses to participants and work practice, and are responsible for counselling the participants. They arrange the rights and obligations of all involved in a practice agreement, drawn up between the parties.

3.6. Quality standards and quality control

The college assesses by means of examinations whether a participant complies with the knowledge, skills and professional attitude, required for a particular vocational programme. Examinations for vocational courses are in the form of continuous assessments. These assessments demonstrate whether a partial unit in the programme has been successfully concluded. Obtaining a partial qualification entitles the participant to a certificate. Once all partial qualifications and the placement are concluded satisfactorily, the course participant receives a diploma. Information about examination can also be found at Colo site (<http://www.colo.nl/English%20version/examination.htm>).

The Adult and Vocational Education Act contains a number of instruments employed by the government to guide and monitor the institutions in relation to quality:

- the qualification structure and the attainment targets for the courses;
- examinations and external legitimisation;
- the teaching agreement between institution and participant;
- more output-focused financing to reward good performance;
- information requirements concerning entrance, progression and exit of participants;
- a system of quality assurance with public accountability and supervision by the Education (or Teaching) Inspectorate.

The following paragraphs present some of these tools that guarantee the societal value of the certificates and institutions.

3.6.1. Board of examiners, biannual reports and the Teaching Inspectorate

The Adult & Vocational Education Act (WEB) requires colleges to establish and maintain a system of quality assurance. This system is aimed at ensuring conscious and systematic quality assurance. It encourages institutions to reconsider and re-evaluate their functioning, and to regularly formulate and monitor the targets set. In addition, it requires institutions to involve independent experts in quality assurance, and where possible, co-operate with other institutions.

In establishing the system, the institutions have a large degree of freedom. However, the system must be functional, and an institution must be able to demonstrate this fact to the outside world, at least in the four areas subject to statutory provisions by the government:

- multiple qualification: for the labour market, for progression and for citizenship;
- accessibility for vulnerable target groups;
- efficient learning routes;
- good advice, guidance and information provision.

In these four areas, the institutions must report on the objectives set, the results achieved, the discrepancies between objectives set and results achieved and the actions undertaken to ensure improvement.

Every two years, each college accounts for its activities by publishing a fully open quality assurance report, describing the structure and results of its quality assurance process. The report must indicate how quality assurance is implemented within all layers of the institution, and who is responsible for this process. This may include such matters as personnel policy, development of new programmes, organisational structure, system management, assessment of learning results and decisions taken on continuity/discontinuity of programmes based on labour market information.

Colleges submit their account in writing to central government, by submitting their biannual quality assurance report to the Education Inspectorate. If the Inspectorate identifies a quality problem in a particular college, consultation is arranged, and the college is given a reasonable opportunity to improve. If these efforts are without result, the Minister may issue a formal warning, and as a final step, withdraw certain rights (the right to award certificates, and the right to financial support).

The Teaching Inspectorate each year assesses the content and level of the examinations, in a number of vocational programmes and at a number of institutions. In its annual examination report, the Inspectorate lists the institutions evaluated and their results in full detail.

3.6.2. CREBO, independent and approved examining bodies

In order to guarantee the societal value of the certificates, the WEB requires that colleges subject 51 percent of the part-qualifications as identified by the Minister to an independent,

external assessment. This means that an independent and approved examining body must state in advance that the content and level of the examinations to be held complies with the relevant attainment targets, and that the examination procedures are correct and in accordance with the statutory requirements.

This requirement of independence means that the examining body itself must not provide any teaching within the qualification structure, nor must it have any interest in the number of successful candidates. Examining bodies may and must not compete with one another.

In order to apply for external verification, the teaching institution can in principle select any examining body it likes, on condition that that body is approved. An examining body registers with the Central Register for Vocational Education (CREBO), indicating the part qualification for which it is willing to offer external verification. The body is free to choose the form of its offer. This may vary from the imposition of parameters and supervision, right through to the actual execution of external verification. The imposition of parameters and supervision means that the examining body draws up guidelines for tests.

The teaching institution itself develops the test, and holds them. The examining body supervises the process of development and setting of exams. The actual execution approach means that the examining body itself develops and possibly also sets examinations. If the teaching institution uses these tests, they are by definition legitimised.

3.6.3. Examining bodies combined in Excenter association

All national bodies for vocational training have their own examining body. The 22 examining bodies joined forces in 1997, by establishing the Excenter association. This association was established to support the teaching institutions in guaranteeing and improving the quality of examinations in vocational education, based on the interests of business and industry. The Excenter association aims to guarantee the quality of professional skills for pupils, for teaching institutions and for companies.

Basic model for external verification

Teaching institutions require greater uniformity in the services offered by the examining bodies. At a time when more than one examining body offers its services to the same school, ten or often even more descriptions of service packages, all with different charges and differing contents, may land on the desk of a single person. The examining bodies united in Excenter present their service provision to the teaching institutions in a recognisable manner. The members of Excenter make a clear differentiation in their package of services between the minimal form of external verification, their services in relation to the development of tests, and other additional services, which can be purchased. The minimal form of external verification is known as the 'basic model for external verification'. This basic model covers both theory and practical testing, and relates to both the vocational practice pathway and the vocational training pathway. The model complies with the legal requirements and follows the guidelines imposed by the teaching Inspectorate. The Inspectorate has a supervisory role for ensuring compliance with legislation and regulations in relation to education.

3.7. Assessment procedures & testing

Assessment procedures and testing refers to:

- Partial certification leading to the total certification; compulsory and free partial certifications; see paragraph 3.5.
- College-based and work-based routes; see paragraph 3.5.1 and 3.5.4
- Responsibility for examination, internal and external quality control; paragraph 3.6

For more information see these paragraphs.

3.8. Practice of VET, description of programs

Description of programs is a description of the present courses. In Appendix 3.1. all the Dutch National bodies are mentioned. The links will lead to the courses per body. For administration and IT, paragraph 4.0 lists the qualifications.

The programs do offer four levels (see paragraph 3.5.2.) or six levels for adult education (see paragraph 3.5.3.). Besides there is a college-based and work-based route; see paragraph 3.5.1 and 3.5.4.

For more information see these paragraphs.

3.9. Target groups policies

3.9.1. MBO and handicap

In the last years, many ROCs (Regional Trainings Center) did their best to make it possible to integrate students with a handicap in their regular training programs (www.leefwijzer.nl). School buildings have been adapted, ROCs designed special learning routes, special training places and there is a lot of expertise about handling students with special needs. All schools have guidance for Training and Handicap.

For some students with an handicap, more time is necessary for examinations or tasks. Mostly there are possibilities to adapt the examinations in form, duration and moment. A precondition to adapt exams is an official prove of the handicap. Also there are possibilities to split up training periods.

3.9.2. Trainings institutes for disabled people

Besides the regular MBO-centres there are five specialized vocational trainings institutes for disabled students. As there are only five of these centers in the whole country, there are facilities to stay (learn and live) at the institute, otherwise the students have to travel a long time.

The specialized vocational trainings institutes are:

- [Eega](#) (auditive handicapped), located in Borne
- [Heliomare](#), located in Wijk aan Zee
- [Hoensbroeck](#) (physical disabled), located in Hoensbroeck
- [Sonneheerdt](#), located in Ermelo
- [Werkenrode](#) (physical disabled), located in Nijmegen.

4. IT AND BA CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

4.1. Qualifications in BA

IT and BA is covered by the national body ECABO (www.ecabo.nl). In total, the ECABO Qualification Structure identifies 32 different vocational qualifications, divided over eight categories: secretarial work, company administration, commercial work, logistics, automation, legal work, information services and security. Three of these categories are linked to the PACE-project. They are themselves differentiated over qualifications; four for secretarial work, three for company administration and six for automation.

Every qualification represents a level, which might be 1) assistant training, 2) basic vocational training, 3) professional training and 4) middle management training or specialist training.

Every qualification is completed with an overview of the job characteristics (*main tasks and job requirements*), and the partial certification within that qualification (see appendix 2).

Not all descriptions are available in English (2001-2002) yet; besides the end terms are very detailed. For these reasons in this report parts of the information are presented. If more information is required, the Dutch texts may be translated. There is a qualification structure available for 2003-2005, but they are written totally in Dutch.

4.1.2. Qualifications for secretarial work, company administration and automation

- Secretarial work
 - Administrative employee (level 1, assistant training)
 - Secretarial employee (level 2, basic vocational training)
 - Secretary (level 3, professional training)
 - Executive secretary/Management assistant (level 4, middle management training or specialist training)
- Company administration
 - Business administration employee (level 2)
 - Accounting-Bookkeeping employee (level 3)
 - Administrator (level 4)
- Automation (ICT)
 - Service employee ICT (level 2)
 - Management ICT employee (level 3)
 - ICT-manager (level 4)
 - Application manager (level 4 s)
 - Application developer (level 4 s)
 - Network manager (level 4 s)

4.2. Qualification of the Administrative Employee

From the beginning of the PACE project, it was clear that Atrium wanted to do something for the people who cannot cope with the present educational system, with a focus on IT and Administration. A logical consequence is that the Dutch partner tries to adapt the present level 1 qualification, Administrative employee, in such a way that it will become a new qualification that is on the one hand useful for the labour market, and on the other hand is reachable for the target group. A description, as presented by the national body, of the qualification 'Administrative Employee follows below.

4.2.1. Job description

Processing texts and file data, post handling and archiving, sending faxes, copying: the administrative worker carries out a whole range of practical administrative tasks. He sends correspondence, accepts and passes on telephone calls. He also receives visitors, transmits documentation material and prepares meetings.

4.2.2. Main tasks of the Administrative worker

- handling and processing mail
- entering data in automated systems
- printing out and printing lists and/or overviews
- processing statistical data
- classifying and registering various documents and administrative data
- (simple) correspondence
- accepting and dealing with incoming telephone calls
- carrying out various copying work
- maintaining the archive
- providing general support to the administrative team

4.2.3. Job requirements

- good spoken and written mastery of Dutch
- knowledge of and some experience with automated systems
- good communication skills

4.2.4. Partial certification for administrative worker

- Business Orientation
- Social-cultural education
- Business communication
- Secretarial practice
- Data management
- Text editing 1 (2000)

4.3. A new partial certification: Office Assistant

In the Netherlands the WEB and the National Qualification Structure take care of the vocational education at the lower and middle level, for people aged 16+. All courses are described in detail in job descriptions, main tasks, job requirements and partial certification without any duplication of partial certification in different work fields. All higher levels of a particular partial certification do at least cover the lower partial certification of the same module. *Field research like interviews with teachers may answer the question in what way practice matches theory.*

4.3.1. Lack of education for people with lower capacities

There are four educational levels, from the lowest level 1 (0,5-1 year) to the highest level 4 (4-6 years). However a part of the population of 16 year or older is not able to accomplish the first level, because of a lack of capabilities. As a certification is a very important tool towards a regular job, the Dutch PACE partners discussed which present job profiles could be adapted or joined together to come to a new job description which is recognizable and useful for employers of different sectors.

Our choice would be a job profile combining the ICT and BA work field, as the corresponding tasks may be found in every sector. The new job profile could have the name 'office assistant', and refers to an employee who can perform simple tasks as copying, typing simple texts, replacing ink cartridges of printers, and so on. In these days the tasks of the standard secretary are more complex than some years ago, while he or she also has to do the simple tasks. An office assistant can bring some relief for the secretary.

Ecabo and Trigos are the partners of Atrium, with intensive contacts with (sheltered) work companies. In the Netherlands these work companies are forced to prepare their employers for the regular labour market. People in a sheltered work company are working there for a reason: they are not able or capable of working in a 'normal' company yet.

4.3.2. From 'Administrative employee' to 'Office Assistant'

The partial certification of Office Assistant is based on the present qualification Administrative employee (level 1, assistant training), but some elements will be deleted and others will be added. A questionnaire will be set up to get a clear picture of a job profile that is useful for the labour market and is feasible for the target group – lower educated adults.

Ecabo and Trigos both have a lot of contacts in the work field. They will use the questionnaire to come to a well-founded choice of partial qualifications.

5. REFERENCES

Web-sources:

www.dutch-vet.nl
www.ecabo.nl
www.eurydice.org
www.colon.nl/English%20version/examination.htm

6. APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: National Bodies for Vocational Training (NI)

Appendix 1: National Bodies for Vocational Training (NI)

In the Netherlands there are National Bodies for Vocational Training, covering different work fields. Cooperation between the labour market and the national body will provide with a practical, workable, useful qualification structure. In some cases there is attention for international certification.

Almost all institutes deal with the following tasks:

- Recruitment, advice and support of apprenticeship companies for vocational training
- Organise a dialog between the branch of industry and vocational training
- Implement and publish labour market research in relation to training needs
- Support companies to set up their training policy
- Formulate diploma-demands for the branch of industry.
- Develop, maintain and distribute practical, relevant exams.

All national bodies in vocational training in the Netherlands are mentioned over here. Most of them offer information in several languages at their website.

- AEQUOR, The National Organisation for Vocational Training in the Agro Food Sector
- Bouwradius, Foundation for Vocational Education in the Construction Industry; www.bouwradius.nl
- ECABO, National Institute for the advancement of vocational training in the secretarial, business, administration, commercial, logistic, automation, legal and security sectors; www.ecabo.nl (French, Deutsch and English)
- GOC, Center for education and labour market in the grafics and media sector; www.goc.nl (English)
- Innovam Groep, Training and Qualification Centre for the automotive branche; www.innovam.nl
- Kenniscentrum Handel, Knowledge Institute for Retail and Wholesale; www.kchandle.nl (French, Deutsch and English)
- KOC NEDERLAND, Hairdressing, Beauticare and Chiropody Training Board; www.koc.nl (Deutsch and English)
- LIFT Group, Learning, Innovation, Fashion and Textile
- LOBAS, agrocltural sector; www.aequor.nl (French, Deutsch, English and Spanish)
- LOB HTV, Education Centre for the Horeca, Toerism and Food Industry; www.lobhtv.nl (French, Deutsch, English and Spanish)
- Opleidingscentrum SVS, Centre for Vocational Training for Painters and Plasterers & Design and Representation Techniques; www.savantis.nl
- OVDB, National Body for the sectors Health Care, Home Economics and Catering, Social Care and Sport; www.ovdb.nl
- SBW, Foundation for Vocational Training in Civil and Maritime Engineering; www.sbw.nl
- SH&M, The Foundation for Wood Trade and Manufacturing and Carpentry Industry and Furnishing Sector; www.shm.nl
- Kenteq; technical craftsmanship; www.kenteq.nl (Deutsch, English). This organisation consists of a joint venture of three former institutes:
 - Intechium (Innovation and Education Centre for Installation Technology),
 - SOM (National Institute for Training Courses in the Metal Industry) and
 - VEV (National Institute for electrotechnical vocational training and qualification).
- SVGB, Foundation for Professional Training in Health Care Technology (handicrafts etc.); www.svgb.nl (English)
- SVO, The Dutch College for the Meat Trade; www.svo.nl
- Vakopleiding Transport en Logistiek, Transport and Logistics Training Board; www.vtenl.nl (English)
- VaPro- OVP, National Institute for Vocational Training and Education in the processing industry and laboratories; www.vapro.nl (English)

- VOC, Vocational Training Institute in the Vehicle Building and Body Repair Industry; www.vocar.nl (French, Deutsch, English and Español)
- VOC/BETEX, textile and clothing industry; www.vocbetex.nl (English)

In order to harmonise vocational training with business practice and to aid promotion, the national bodies have formulated a national qualification structure based on the 'WEB', the Adult & Vocational Education Act (Wet Educatie Beroepsonderwijs). This entails that training is available in all jobs, which are related to the sectors mentioned above. The qualification structures, which have been approved by the Ministry of Education, are all but static. If the industry demands it, new training will be integrated in the structure.

ROMANIA

1. INTRODUCTION

The information included in this chapter is based on an extensive literature research, on field research and on talks with various experts. Part of the information was found on the Internet and in diverse publications (books, magazines). The presentation of the Romanian Education System is mainly based on the information available on the website of the Eurydice information network on education in Europe (www.eurydice.org). An exploratory study - “The Vocational Education and Training of Adults in Romania” – financed from external sources and meant to provide objective data to the National Adult Training Board was used for the presentation of the VET. Other sources of information were the websites of the Ministry of Education, Research and Sports, and of the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family.

The information gathered through literature research was supplemented with information collected by interviewing experts working in public institutions and non-governmental organizations. The list of interviews is briefly presented here:

- Mr. Aurel Suci, director of the Alba County Agency for Vocational Training and Employment was interviewed regarding the perceived need for and the legal possibilities of implementing partial certifications.
- Mrs. Alexandrina Popa, Inspector at the Alba County School Inspectorate provided useful input regarding the situation of lower and upper level high school graduates and of the Schools of Arts and Trades graduates from the employability point of view.
- The discussion with Mr. Mihai Baltador, director of the Regional Centre for Continuous Vocational Training in Public Administration Sibiu, was focused on the need for training in this domain, at both medium and post-graduate level.
- Mr. Doncea Nicolae, the Mayor of Sebeş, was approached regarding the necessary training in office activities for matching the needs of the foreign investors setting up new companies in his town, according to the occupational standards and to the needs of these investors
- Other talks were held with Mr. Ovidiu Drăguţ, representing the Alba County’s Office for Consultancy in Agriculture, and Mrs. Parau Rodica, representing the French-Romanian Association for Agricultural Development, regarding the setting up of a training for quality assessment of the agricultural products. The respective profession is included in the Professions Catalogue (C.O.R.) and has a curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education, Research and Sports.

Several institutions were contacted, some being in charge with approving partial qualifications (the National Adult Training Board, the Ministry of Education, Research and Sports), some other for their experience in organising Adult Education and for their knowledge of the Romanian training market (the Department for Adult Education of the Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest, the Human Resource Training Centre of the Technical University Bucharest, the Alba County Agency for Vocational Training and Employment, the Alba County School Inspectorate, the Direction for Agriculture of the Alba County).

Some of the contacts were focused mainly on achieving some specific long term objectives of the AISTEDA Academic Foundation, connected to setting up new vocational courses matching the current needs of the labour market, such as:

- obtaining the trust authorization for running a Post-secondary School in Tourism and Hostelry Services from both The Ministry of Education, Research and Sports, and the Alba County School Inspectorate;
- running short courses in tourism management and public administration management, both at post-secondary level, and at post-graduate level, in co-operation with the Department for Adult Education of the Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest;

- organizing refreshing courses for high school IT teachers, in co-operation with the Human Resource Training Centre of the Technical University Bucharest;
- obtaining the authorization from the National Adult Training Board to offer vocational training courses for shop assistants.

In all these contacts with public authorities and NGO, the objectives and activities of the PACE project were introduced to our partners, and their feedback on our attempt to accredit partial certifications was essentially positive.

2. THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN ROMANIA

The Romanian education system is under continuous changes and improvements in various domains and levels, according to economic, social, political and cultural changes identified within the society.

The Romanian education system has gone through major transformations in the last 15 years, mainly regarding its structure.

There are several bodies ruling the education system, the most influential being the Ministry of Education Research and Youth. For the VET, the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family plays also an important role.

The current educational system in Romania is composed of the following levels:

- 1.Pre-school education (age of 1 – 6);
- 2.Compulsory basic education – primary and lower secondary education (age of 6 – 15);
- 3.Upper secondary education (age of 15 – 19);
- 4.Higher education (age of 19 – 25);
- 5.Post –graduate study (age of 23 – 27);
- 6.Adult education.

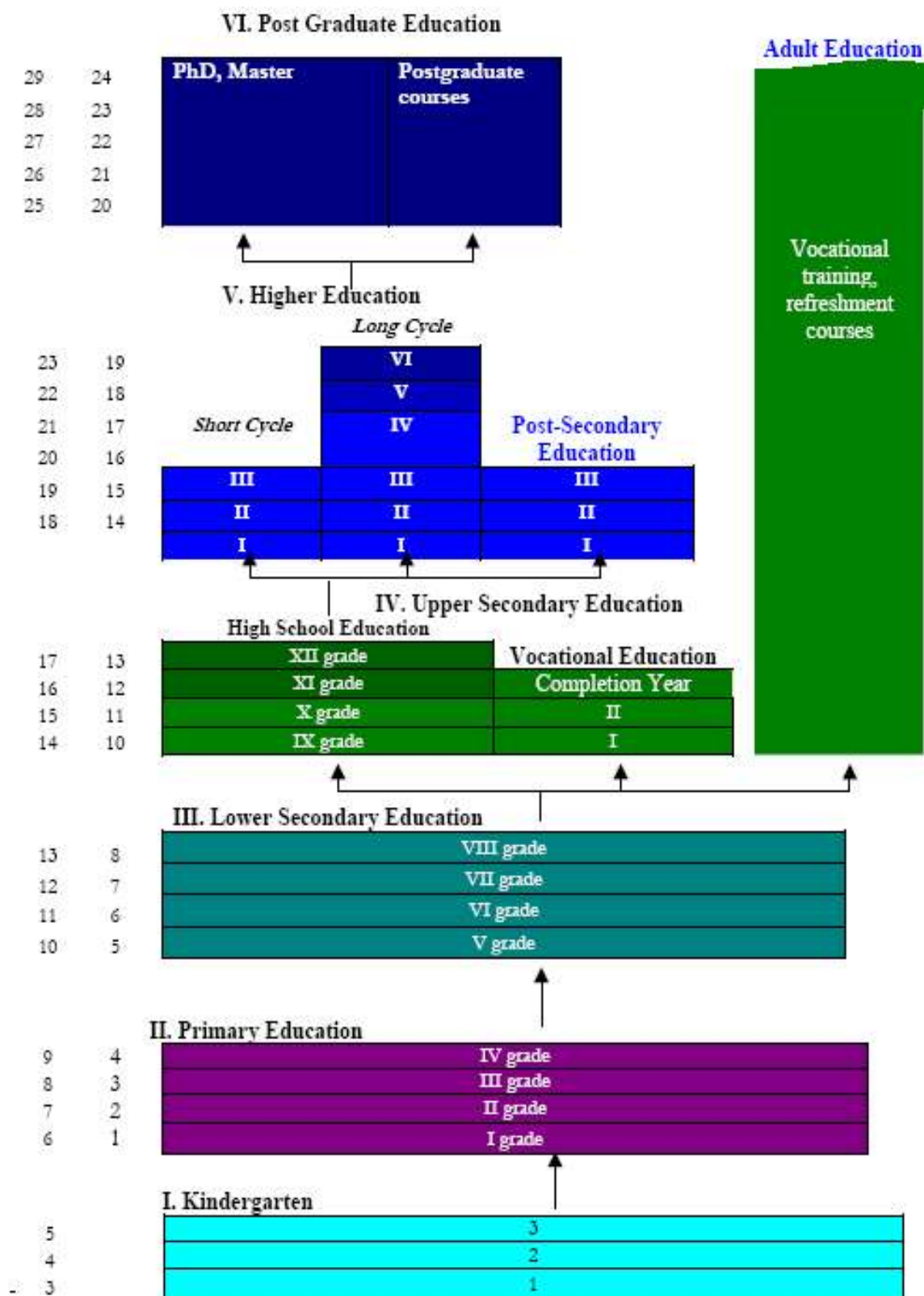


Figure 1. Chart of the Romanian educational system.

The new Education Act brought some major changes into the education system in Romania. Beginning with the 2003/04 school year, compulsory education has been extended from 8 to 10 years. Compulsory education will begin from now on at the age of 6 instead of 7. The lower secondary education is composed of 4 years of general lower secondary education provided by *Gimnaziu*, followed by 2 years of either general or specialised lower secondary education provided by the lower cycle of high school (*Liceu*), or vocational lower secondary education provided by the Arts and Trades School (*Școală de Arte și Meserii*).

Post-compulsory upper secondary education now includes:

- a completion year – following the graduation of Arts and Trades School and offering courses for continuation of studies in the upper cycle of high school (*Liceu*) and a higher vocational qualification;
- the upper cycle of high school – providing general and specialised courses and lasting 2 to 3 years, depending on the domain of specialisation.

Curriculum reform aims at:

- convenient curriculum adjustment to individual learning and training needs and in accordance with the changes taking place in society; skills development for: creative and critical thinking, use of modern technologies, problem-solving, etc;
- use of acquired knowledge and competencies in new contexts, related to concrete situations of real life;
- use of compulsory education as a basis for the development of necessary skills and the guidance towards life long learning.

In Higher Education, some of the main reform actions, related especially to Bologna Declaration, concern the quality assurance, a better correlation between higher education qualifications and the labour market, the integration of the Romanian Higher Education system within the European system.

2.1 Structure and organisation of initial education

2.1.1. Pre-primary education

In 2003/04 school year, pre-primary education covered the 3- to 6-year-old age group. This type of education is provided in special institutions – Kindergartens (*grădinițe*), most of them public. Attendance is optional and free of charge. In 2002/03, the attendance rate in pre-school education as a whole was 69.2%. Both public and private kindergartens offer education activities through: normal programmes (5 hours per day), long-type programmes (10 hours per day) and weekly programmes (5 days per week). Preprimary education is organised by age groups: 3- to 4-, 4- to 5-, 5- to 6- year-old age groups.

2.1.2. Compulsory full-time education

a) Phases

	Age Group
<i>Școală primară</i> (primary)	6-10 years
<i>Gimnaziu</i> (first phase of general lower secondary)	10-14 years
<i>Liceu – ciclul inferior</i> (second phase of general or specialised lower secondary) or <i>Școală de Arte și Meserii</i> (vocational lower secondary)	14-16 years

Compulsory education lasts 10 years and is divided in three phases: primary education (4 years), first phase of lower secondary education – general (4 years) and second phase of lower secondary education, which provides general, specialised or vocational courses (2 years). This compulsory education structure, resulted from the modification of the Education Act in June

2003 (Law 268/2003) was implemented starting from 2003/04 school year. Duration of compulsory education is extended with two years after general lower secondary education and pupils may choose to continue their education either in the lower cycle of *Liceu*, which offers comprehensive education and includes pre-specialisation elements necessary for the guidance towards the continuation of studies in upper secondary education, or in *Școală de Arte și Meserii* (Arts and Trades School), which provides vocational education, corresponding to various occupational domains and leading to employment; in this case graduates should follow a completion year before entering in upper secondary education. Pupils will enter in the lower cycle of *Liceu* (high school) or in the Arts and Trades School, starting from the 2004/05 school year.

b) Length of the school day/week/year

The school year 2003/04 comprises 179 days (36 weeks) of teaching, divided in two semesters. Courses are distributed over five days a week. The number of periods (lasting 50 minutes) per week varies from 18/20, in the first years of primary education, to 29/30, in the last years of the first phase of general lower secondary education, and up to 30, in Arts and Trades School or 32 in the lower cycle of high school respectively. The minimum number of hours of teaching a year (calculated on basis of the number of periods per week, the number of weeks and the duration of a period) is 540 for primary school, 870 for *Gimnaziu* (first phase of general lower secondary school), 900 for Arts and Trades School, and 960 for lower cycle of the high school.

c) Class size/student grouping

In 2002/03, the number of pupils per teacher was 18 at primary school level and 13 at lower secondary level. The average class size was 20. The number of pupils per class required by law is between 10 and 30. The classes are co-educational and made up of pupils of the same age. At lower secondary level, pupils who are two years (or more) older than the pupils in the corresponding year can attend evening classes. In primary schools, subjects are taught only by one teacher (except for religion, foreign languages, physical education and music). At lower secondary level, a specialist teacher teaches each subject.

d) Curricular control and content

The curriculum framework for primary and lower secondary education, set up by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, allows schools to design their own timetable schemes and includes: the core curriculum and the curriculum at school's disposal. Subjects are grouped according to 7 curricular areas: language and communication, mathematics and natural sciences, people and society, arts, physical education, technologies, counselling and guidance. The main subjects are Romanian, foreign languages, the history of Romania and physical education (half of the number of weekly hours). Teaching methods are not imposed by official regulations, but there are some recommendations concerning alternative textbooks, homework, and didactic use of ICT.

e) Assessment, progression and qualifications

Pupils are assessed by teachers throughout the school year. Pupils in difficulty can be made to repeat the year. At the end of primary school, pupils move automatically on to the next level (with no final examination). At the end of *Gimnaziu* pupils will face final national tests devised by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth. Results obtained in these tests together with the results obtained during the four years of the first phase of general lower secondary education will enable pupils to choose one of the two institutions for the continuation of lower secondary education: *Liceu* or *Școală de Arte și Meserii* respectively. There is no final examination at the end of lower secondary education (which coincides with the end of compulsory education stage).

The Ministry of Education, Research and Youth has specified the methodology for the continuation of lower secondary education, after graduation of *Gimnaziu*, in 2004/05 school year. It stipulates that at the end of *Gimnaziu* pupils will sit final national tests. Depending on the results obtained in these tests, the results achieved during *Gimnaziu*, and their options, they are to be admitted in the lower cycle of *Liceu* or in the Arts and Trades School.

Graduates of the lower cycle of *Liceu* are awarded a graduation certificate, a portfolio for further education and, on request, a copy of the record containing the marks received during compulsory education. The entrance in the upper cycle of *Liceu*, of pupils who graduated the lower cycle of *Liceu*, is based on the methodology defined by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, and announced at the beginning of each school year prior to the entrance.

Graduates of *Școală de Arte și Meserii* are awarded a graduation certificate, a portfolio for further education and, by request, a copy of the record containing the marks received during compulsory education. Besides, they may obtain, after successful passing the exam for certification of vocational skills, a level one vocational qualification certificate. In order to enter the upper secondary education, they have to attend and graduate the completion year.

2.2. Upper secondary and post-secondary education

a) Types of education

	Groups of Age
Completion year (vocational upper secondary)	16-17 years of age
Liceu – ciclul superior (general and specialised upper secondary)	16-18/19 years of age
Școală postliceală (post-secondary education)	18-20/21 years of age

Completion year offers the possibility to attain the necessary education level to participate in upper secondary education and to acquire a higher vocational qualification. Upper secondary education (upper cycle of *Liceu*) provides general and specialised courses leading to the continuation of studies in post-secondary, or higher education. Post-secondary education prepares students for a higher vocational qualification and should lead to employment.

b) Admission criteria

Admission in the completion year and in the upper cycle of *Liceu* is based on the methodology defined by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, and announced a year prior the beginning of a new school year.

In post-secondary education, only medical post-secondary schools require the baccalaureate diploma, awarded at the end of *Liceu*. As a general rule, all the post-secondary schools organise entrance examinations.

c) Curricular control and content

Curriculum for the completion year is being designed according to the new structure of the education system. In general and specialised upper education, the curriculum framework set up by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth covers 7 curricular areas: language and communication, mathematics and natural sciences, people and society, arts, physical education, technologies, counselling and guidance. The importance of each group of subjects varies according to the type of school. The Ministry of Education, Research and Youth and the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family set the curricula for post-secondary schools.

d) Assessment, progression and qualifications

Pupils are assessed by teachers continuously, in all subjects, during the whole school year. Teachers decide whether a pupil should repeat the year or not. Graduates of completion year are awarded a graduation certificate, a portfolio for further education and, by request, a copy of the record containing the marks received. After facing a vocational examination, they may obtain a level two vocational qualification certificate. Graduates of completion year, who possess a graduation certificate and a level two vocational qualification certificate may attend upper secondary education, following the methodology defined a year prior the beginning of each new school year.

There is a final examination (*examen de bacalaureat*) at the end of the upper cycle of *Liceu*. The diploma accompanying this examination (*diplomă de bacalaureat*) allows pupils to apply to take the entrance examination for higher education. Any pupil who completes upper secondary education, with or without a final leaving certificate, can apply to take the entrance examination for post-secondary education (however, medical post-secondary schools require the *diplomă de bacalaureat*). The postsecondary leaving certificate (*certificat de absolvire*) grants students access to the labour market.

2.2.1. Special needs

The policy of integration is currently being developed in Romania. Most children (27 165 pupils in 2002/03) with special educational needs attend the corresponding special schools. The structure of special education in these schools is very similar to that in the mainstream.

2.3. Structure and organisation of higher education

a) Types of institutions

Higher education comprises short-term courses (two to three years) in university colleges (*colegii universitare*) and long-term courses (from four to six years) in universities, institutes or academies.

b) Access

The upper secondary education leaving certificate (*diplomă de bacalaureat*) is required by all establishments. Admission is based on entrance examinations organised by all institutions on the basis of general criteria defined by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth.

c) Qualifications

Students with college qualifications (*diplomă de absolvire*) can continue their studies in long-term higher education establishments, in the same domain or in a similar one, after passing an entrance examination established by faculty councils. Long-term courses end in a final examination leading to the title *licențiat*. Successful students can go on to attend postgraduate courses.

2.3.1. Structure and organisation of adult education - Lower and middle levels of VET in Romania

In Romania, the middle level of education refers to high-school graduates (12-13 years of school education). The lower level refers to gymnasium graduates (10 years), but also includes people who have left the system sooner, without obtaining a study certificate.

3. THE VET & CERTIFICATION SYSTEM IN ROMANIA

In Romania, the existing laws state the right of both employed and unemployed adults to have access to vocational education and training (VET). All the employers, both public and private, must organise the access of their employees to VET.

3.1. Historical development

Before 1989, vocational training was done by public institutions solely, and the system was based on two elements:

- Centralized planning and organization of the vocational training
- Mandatory continuous training.

The continuous vocational training system for different levels of competence was well established and it was compulsory for employees to attend courses every year. A whole network of schools and vocational training institutions was developed in all regions of the country.

Due to this centrally controlled strategy the system worked, and the number of participants was big. The courses were often conventional or superficial and the motivation of the trainees was rather low, so that the results aimed at were not always achieved.

Before 1989, the vocational training system had a double subordination:

- The Ministry of Education
- A specialized Ministry (for Agriculture, Trade, Machine industry, Electronic etc).

The practical stages were performed in either specialized centres or directly in publicly-owned enterprises. At the end of the initial vocational training period, the trainees were assigned to a specific position in an organization, according to their acquired knowledge and experience.

After 1989 the privatization of the industry and agriculture changed the relationship between ministries and enterprises. The enterprises received more autonomy and they were no more directly subordinated to the Government through Ministries. This new situation had major consequences on the vocational training system:

- The enterprises, which can foster practical training, were private and no longer involved in vocational training
- The continuous, lifelong vocational training was not compulsory any more.

This led to the transformation of the vocational training system. The initial vocational training is still subordinated to the Ministry of Education, while the continuous vocational training has gained its total autonomy. The continuous vocational training centres -licensed by the National Board for Adult Vocational Education- act according to their own strategy. Due to this important advantage, the vocational training system can evolve upon private initiative; can promote a new, more flexible conception in order to meet the market requirements. The predicted results are new high quality programmes, modern training tools, and efficient evaluation.

The lifelong vocational training is developed in accordance with specifically designed job activities, in order to meet the needs of the internal labour market at an equal level of competence with that of the European market. The continuous vocational training system is confronted with the resources issue. That means sometimes a shortage of financial resources, which creates difficulties in improving the vocational training system and in the implementation of training quality standards.

On the other hand, the vocational training system had to prepare new curricula according to the new skills required on the labour market and to change the teaching methodology. The open market and the actual technologies require a higher level of competence for each particular job. New skills are required such as communication and computer basic knowledge and the vocational training system has to find quick solutions for all these issues. It is important to emphasize that the final cycle of the vocational training process is the social integration of the students. The rate of social insertion of the trainees is also the most important way of the evaluation of the outcomes of the vocational training system. The vocational training organization develops also other activities supporting the students to find and to apply for a job.

In Romania, there are two major types of VET:

- the initial vocational training, and
- the continuous one.

Initial VET is necessary for acquiring the minimum of vocational competencies for being employed. Continuous VET succeeds to the initial one, and provides either further development of existing competencies, or the acquisition of new competencies. Vocational competencies result in the capacity of accomplishing the activities' belonging to a job in accordance to the quality level specified of the occupational standard.

Recently, the new Education Act brought important changes to the vocational education system in Romania. The VET reform concerns the following main aspects:

3.1.1. Establishment of Arts and Trades School

The new Arts and Trades School will replace the initial training institutions at upper secondary level. It will provide compulsory vocational education to pupils wishing to attend their vocational

stream. After graduation, pupils will be awarded a diploma certifying their vocational competencies, corresponding to the first level of vocational qualification.

3.1.2. *Establishment of completion year*

The completion year is conceived to facilitate to continuation of studies in the upper cycle of high school (post-compulsory upper secondary education) and to provide a higher vocational qualification.

3.1.3. *Curriculum changes*

Under the circumstances of still weak signals coming from the labour market, main stream curricular areas are established allowing for multilevel multiple qualifications. This strategic option ensures an increased vocational mobility (avoiding the risks associated with narrow qualifications) and enhances opportunities for social integration. Narrow specialisation modules can then be used within further vocational training.

New subjects have been introduced in curriculum, in order to promote equal opportunities and to give VET graduates the possibility to continue their studies, e.g. ICT, Entrepreneurial Education, Civic Culture, Foreign Languages, Vocational Guidance and Counselling. The new curriculum allows for a cross-curricular approach, according to students' interests, as well as to the requirements of the local business environment.

3.1.4. *Development of social partnerships*

The local community providing reliable information about the local labour market can suggest adequate ways for meeting the demand of certain qualifications. Further vocational training is carried out within the educational system, using specific programmes initiated and organised by public or private institutions, in the spirit of social partnership.

As for the lifelong vocational education, the core types of continuous vocational education are:

- Initial (re)training
- Training for obtaining a specific qualification
- Qualification enhancement training
- Specialization training
- Re-training for acquiring a new qualification.

One's vocational competencies can be acquired through formal, non-formal or informal education. Attending a training program is not necessarily a pre-condition for obtaining skills certification.

Vocational training programs are organized for the professions included in COR (the Classification of Professions in Romania) and for the acquisition of competencies that are needed in more than one profession. Each such program for competence acquisition must comply with the corresponding occupational standard approved by the National Board for Adult Vocational Education, who took over this responsibility from the former National Council for Occupational Standards and Attestation. The occupational standard is a document attesting the specific competencies and their appropriate qualitative level needed for accomplishing the tasks associated to one profession.

The Classification of Occupations in Romania (Clasificarea ocupatiilor din România - COR) According to the Government's Decision 575 bis/1992 regarding "*The Elaboration of Unique Public Interest Catalogues in the Context of the General Concept of IT Implementation in Romania*", the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family, together with the National Commission for Statistics, the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth and the Ministry of Industry are responsible for drafting and updating the occupation classification (positions – occupations) in Romania.

For facilitating international comparisons, but also for reflecting the restructuring involved by the transition toward a market economy, the decision factors have chose to harmonize the occupation classification in Romania with the ones of the countries belonging to the Economic European Community.

The current edition of the COR is based on the internationally agreed classification principles and on the recommendations of the British experts body sent by the Economic European Community and the U.N to assist its elaboration.

The occupations were placed on 4 hierarchical levels, according to the following classification criteria:

1. *The education level* (the last school graduated), used for dividing occupations in the 10 major groups. Eight of the 10 major groups are described according to the 4 major qualification levels defined by ISCO:

MAJOR GROUP	Education Level
1. Policy makers, high officers and managers	N/A
2. Specialists (with intellectual and scientific occupations	4
3. Technical staff	3
4. Clerks	2
5. Workers, trade operators and similar occupations	2
6. Agricultural and fishing workers	2
7. Workers and craftsmen	2
8. Installation and machinery operators, machinery, equipment and other products manufacturers	2
9. Low qualified workers	1
10. Army	N/A

Five of the 8 major groups (4,5,6,7 and 8) are considered to be similar regarding the qualification level and are different only because they refer at large specialization groups for different occupations.

In defining the two major groups named *Policy makers, high officers and managers* and *Army*, there are not any references to the qualification model, because here there are different important criteria, such as the political decision and managerial tasks, respectively the military duties.

2. *The competence level and the complexity of assigned tasks* is important for forming the major subgroups, the minor and basic groups of the major group 1.
3. *The specialization level* criterion is used for forming the major subgroups, the minor and basic groups of the major groups 2 and 8.
4. *The technological processes, the raw materials used and the machinery and tools employed* are criteria for forming the major subgroups, the minor and basic groups of the major groups 2, 7 and 8.

Both the classification as a whole and the open qualification system allow for an easy conversion of occupational data in the ISCO 88 (COM) and in the ISCO 88 systems, for the aggregation of occupations data on 4 levels and for the completion and updating of the current edition, every time when new occupations appear/disappear.

The occupational profiles targeted by our project belong to the medium and lower levels of education, meaning 10 or 12 years of school attendance, or less. We introduce here an excerpt of the Classification of Occupations in Romania, including IT and administration occupational profiles at a lower and middle level:

41	Office clerks	
	411	Secretaries and operators for typewriters and computers
	4111	Short hand typists and typists
	4112	Text processing operators and similar clerks
	4113	Data input, validation and processing operators
	4114	Computing machines operators

	4115	Secretaries
	412	Clerks for accounting and financial records maintenance
	4121	Recorders of accounting operations
	4122	Clerks in financial activities
	413	Clerks for maintaining raw materials, products or transportation records
	4131	Inventory keepers
	4132	Clerks for programming and follow-up of manufacturing
	4133	Transportation clerks
	414	Library, archive, correspondence and similar clerks
	4141	Librarians and archivists
	4142	Shipping clerks and post agents
	4143	Codifiers, text editors and similar
	419	Other office clerks
	4190	Other office clerks

The training providers who intend to organise courses for professions not yet defined by recognised occupational standards can develop occupational standards drafts to be submitted to the approval of competent organisms.

3.1.5. *The current situation of the market of vocational training*

The market of vocational training in Romania is underdeveloped at this moment in time. The demand is mostly coming from individuals with low financial resources, and their main concern is the cost and not the quality of training. This type of client is not able to evaluate the providers' performance and is incapable to influence neither their attitude, nor that of the authority supervising this market.

Because of these conditions, the main training providers are the "universal" ones. They have the tendency of offering any type of courses, but are usually specialised in initial, basic training programmes. Very seldom the clients of these courses are able to find a job because of these acquired skills.

The training process itself has a poor structure, most of its elements being developed on the spot, directed toward short-term goals instead of aiming at developing long-term strategies. Before 2000, on the market coexisted training programmes not offering any certification at all, with others providing certifications that were not accepted by all the employers, and with some who provided certification endorsed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and/or by the Ministry of Education – with national-wide recognition.

3.2. The Legal Framework

In the last 14 years, the legal framework regarding this field was very complicated and unstable. Some of the accreditation and certification procedures were enforced by law, but only partially put into practice. Many of them were regulation authority driven and not market driven. They emphasized the existing so called “diploma culture” and have forced the training providers to close formal agreements with the public authority. These agreements were granting the training providers the right to offer a national-wide recognised certificate, but at the same time forced them to provide their services at lower costs, and also to provide additional services (e.g. job finding) they were not specialised in.

The training programmes sponsored by the County Agencies for Employment and Vocational Training were another weak point. These training programmes turned into hidden subventions offered to the companies that committed themselves to employ the trainees after attending the course they organised. Both the poor quality of these training programmes and the extremely low level of skills acquired by the trainees have determined the authorities to discontinue these procedures.

Recently, in an effort to cope with these problems, the adults’ vocational education and training were reorganised by a Government Ordinance no.129/2000. Its provisions were enhanced and refined and resulted in the Law on the Adult Vocational Education and Training no.375/2002, approved by the Romanian Parliament and enforced starting with 1 January 2003.

3.3. The Financial Framework

A percentage of 95.6% of all pupils attend public schools funded by the State. Private educational establishments, administered and organised by non-governmental organisations, are more common at higher education level. The Ministry of Education, Research and Youth consists in several departments that are responsible for different tasks and education levels. At regional level, each county has a School Inspectorate managed by a general inspector. Each establishment has a school board and a management board that assist head teachers in fulfilling their managerial tasks. As regards school inspection, head teachers and general inspectors must elaborate annual reports on the situation of education under their supervision. Each report is then submitted to local authorities and to the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth.

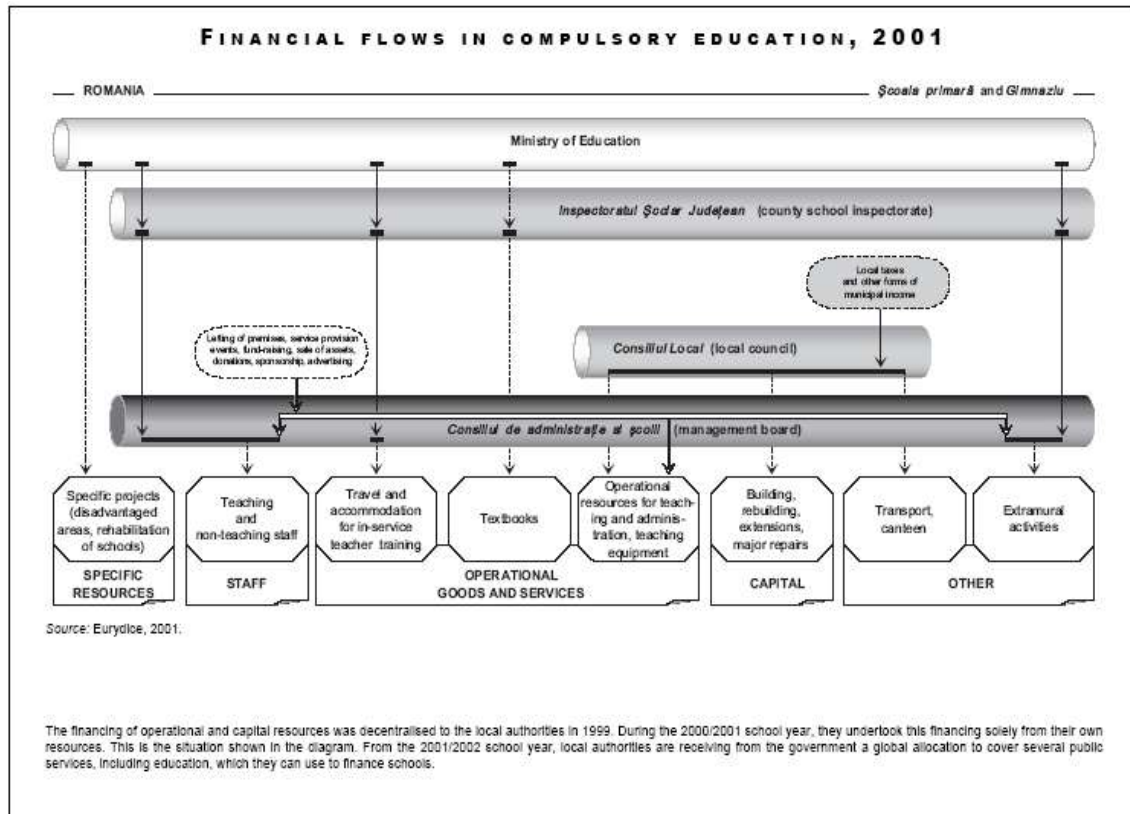


Figure 2: funding flows for initial education, including the vocational one. Continuing education has a different regime.

The funding sources for vocational education and training are:

- The employers' funds destined to train their own employees
- The fund for unemployment allowances
- Funds from sponsors, donations, other external sources
- Own contributions of both employed and unemployed people

In the current poor economic situation, there are few companies that are able and willing to pay for training their employees. In general, only the public institutions continue to do this. Most of the private companies employ only people already possessing the necessary competencies, or expect their employees to enhance their competencies on their own account.

Being afraid of becoming or staying unemployed, many people consider investing in their education a main priority. The worst of all is the situation of people with very poor skills, who live under the threshold of poverty, and who are not able to do this.

Of course, the County Agencies for Employment and Vocational Training have the mission to help every unemployed person to attend the appropriate training programs for becoming employable, covering all the costs from the fund for unemployment allowances. But because the scarcity of work places, this offers no guarantee in finding a job.

3.4. Organisations Involved in VET

3.4.1. Accreditation Bodies

The institutions providing initial vocational education have to be accredited by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth.

The providers of lifelong vocational education and training have to be registered as such at the Register of Commerce and to be authorised in this direction by the National Board for Adult Vocational Training, through its Authorising Commissions (one for each county and one for Bucharest). These organizations are entitled to provide qualification or graduation certificates with national-wide recognition. In the case of courses organised by companies for their own employees, if these companies are not registered also as attested vocational education providers, the issued certificates will have only company-wide recognition.

The authorisation of VET providers is done separately for every occupation and for every local branch, based on their experience, results, infrastructure, compliance of the curriculum with the occupational standards, and the quality of their trainers. The trainers must be specialists in the subject they are teaching, and after 2010, they will also have to prove they underwent a special pedagogical training for working with adults.

The authorisation can be withdrawn at any time, if the VET provider fails complying with any of the accreditation criteria. The authorised VET providers are recorded in the national-wide VET Register. According to a study organised on the vocational training of adults in Romania, 63% of the courses provide initial training, 86% are qualification courses and 43% are enhancement courses.

3.4.2. National Bodies

The ministries responsible for VET in Romania are the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, and the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family.

The National Board for Adult Vocational Training ([Consiliul National pentru Formarea Profesionala a Adultilor](#), [CNFPA](#)) is a tripartite institution providing support for adult training and contributing to the elaboration of strategies and policies in the field. It was initially set up by Law no. 132/1999, but in June 2003 a new law was adopted (Law no. 253/2003, on the setting up, organising and functioning of CNFPA), after being discussed in the CES in March.

Important changes to the law resulted from the liquidation of the former Council for Occupational Standards and Assessment ([Consiliul pentru Standarde Ocupationale si Atestare](#), CSOA). The assets and liabilities of this institution, as well as its staff, were transferred to CNFPA. Thus CNFPA's competencies were very much enlarged, and the law specifies 13 responsibilities, compared with only three under the old regulations. According to the new law, CNFPA has an advisory role, but also coordinates and controls at national level activities such as:

- the authorisation of training providers through its authorisation committees set up at the county level;
- the elaboration of occupational standards; and
- the evaluation and certification of occupational competencies achieved by the participants in vocational training programmes.

In fulfilling CNFPA's mission, a key element is the creation of authorisation committees at the county level, which are to be shaped in a tripartite manner to include representatives of trade unions, employers' organisations and local administration. The process of establishing such committees is still under way and from 2004 they will have an important role, not only in defining vocational training strategies at the regional level, but also in the authorisation of all training providers and in the evaluation and certification of occupational competencies.

A key mission of CNFPA is the completion of a national registry of qualifications, a project initiated long ago under the administration of CSOA. The failure to complete this exercise so far is regarded as impeding the recovery and dissemination of vocational training among employees, which was seriously reduced during Romania's period of transition.

3.4.3. Training Providers

- a) *Specialised VET providers*, who exist both at the initial vocational education level, and at the lifelong vocational education level. They are:
- Schools of Arts and Trades, at the lower secondary level;
 - Vocational High Schools, at the upper secondary level;
 - Technical Colleges, providing undergraduate higher education;
 - Training Centres offering various courses in a specific area – mostly private companies;
 - Specialized Training Centres, usually subordinated to a Ministry.
- b) *The employers themselves* organize specialised vocational training at their location in several occasions, because they need employees with specific skills.
- c) *There are also other institutions* hosting practical and specialization activities both in Romania and abroad, such as:
- big companies, small and medium enterprises
 - In the hospitality industry and in catering – specialized units
 - Business incubators
 - Diverse organizations developing pilot projects funded by national and international projects.

3.4.4. Other Organisations

There are some other organisations involved in providing vocational education and training, such as:

- Local authorities involved in new opportunities identification;
- The labour force placement centres;
- The Regional Agencies for Employment and Vocational Training;
- Various NGOs offering vocational training courses; a special case is that of the associations of people with disabilities, that offer courses customised to their members' needs;
- Quality certification bodies operating in Romania:
 - ECOCERT (France), LACON (Austria), SKAL (The Netherlands), ICEO (Italy) for vegetal and animal products, who implement not only the product certification, but also the human resource qualification mechanisms for different levels, in order to acquire the required certification
 - The National Authority for Ecological Products
 - Ministries responsible for standards development in their sector.

3.5. The Qualification System

The qualification system in VET must point to the skills and competencies that should be acquired by a trainee at the end of a vocational course. The occupational standards still under development aim at providing a framework for defining these skills and competencies.

Currently, the Romanian society has to face several problems, such as:

- The occupational standards are far behind – resulting in a lack of criteria for defining new competencies; there are only a few occupational standards available, compared to the high number of specialisations included in C.O.R..
- For several new competencies the same old names are used, and the competencies are not the same anymore;
- From the formal point of view, everything seems to function all right, but in reality there are many differences between the educational offer and the education needs;
- There are quite a few mechanisms allowing the completion of competencies and including the recognition of already acquired competencies;
- The lack of a clear occupational structure at the organizational level results in a lack of awareness regarding the need for new competencies.
- The enforcement of very particular criteria at organizational level for some organizations.

There are also some positive parts, such as:

- Qualifications can only be obtained under the monitoring of the Ministry for Education, Research and Sports, of the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family or of another body appointed by them that perform their activities according to the standards elaborated and agreed by these ministries.
- Based on these standards, the private providers of educational services are accepted too, creating the basis for competition.
- The already existing standards provide a basis not only for defining the occupational standards, but also for defining the mechanisms of the qualification system.
- The implementation of quality standards as requirements leads to the implementation of new competencies and guides their precise and formal designation, by enhancing the existing framework, considered as starting point.
- Another existing possibility is that of developing new competencies in cooperation with a European certification authority.

3.6. Quality Standards / Assurance

In most cases, there are no procedures in place for recording the trainees' evaluation of the training programme and of the training provider. Self-evaluation is done very seldom by training providers. Few of them are observing their former trainees success in obtaining a job.

The obligation of external evaluation for training providers is enforced by law. The training providers have to undergo through periodical evaluations made by the Authorisation Commissions. If they fail in complying with the authorisation criteria, which also include their results, their authorisation is withdrawn.

As with Quality Standards, there are only few training providers who have implemented quality systems. Most of them are still in an initial phase. Many training providers are not yet able to perceive the need for adopting such systems, which they find too costly for the current situation of the market, and consequently unrewarding. Some exceptions are the Romanian-German Foundations from Timisoara, Arad and Sibiu, who have implemented reliable quality systems and whose certificates are recognised on the labour market, even if they are not endorsed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and/or by the Ministry of Education.

Regarding trainers, they are persons of high qualification and with experience acquired in adults training. Though, only few of them attended formal training on adult pedagogy. Their number is

expected to increase as the law states that till 2010, all the trainers active in adult vocational education and training will have to acquire the pedagogical skills for teaching adults.

In present, they are few training organisations providing training for trainers. In the future, it is probable to witness an increase of the number and frequency of training of trainers sessions, as new occupations and specialisation continue to be created every day. The training organisation will probably even tend to prefer experienced practitioners to experienced trainers.

3.7. Assessment Procedures and Testing

3.7.1. Admission criteria

Most of the courses do not have any entry pre-conditions. According to the same study, 20% of the courses require having previous training, 30% organise initial testing for evaluating the participants' initial skills and knowledge, and only 3% have pre-requirements related to the physical condition of the participants.

3.7.2. Final examinations

The participants to vocational training courses and the apprentices are tested at the end of their training program. The tests are both theoretical and practical. The testing is organised by a special commission, formed of both external specialists, and representatives of the training organisation. Occasionally, representatives of the company contracting the training of its employees could participate.

The trainees have to pass these tests in order to acquire the respective certificates. The costs for testing and certification are usually paid from the same source as the training. They can come from the employers, from the fund for unemployment allowances, or can be paid by the trainees themselves.

3.7.3. Certification

The participants who pass the tests receive qualification certificates or occupational competence certificates. The qualification certificates must have an annex containing the list of acquired competencies.

The professional competencies acquired through other types of vocational training can be evaluated and certified by the Council for Occupational Standards and Attestation, and vocational competence certificates can be issued.

3.8. Practice of VET

Training is provided mainly in the following fields:

Constructions	IT
business & administration	Textile industry
Services	Carpentry
Car repair	Human resource management
Tourism	Technical, electrics, communication

However, most training providers are very flexible and they are ready to organise courses on new subjects if the labour market displays a need in any other professions.

The duration of the training programmes varies from case to case, but in most cases ranges from 3 weeks to 3-4 months. Usually, initial training programmes and competencies' enhancement programmes have shorter duration (up to 2months), while qualification courses

take longer (3-6 months, or even 9 months). Some of the providers were forced by their clients to reduce the duration of their programmes, because these cannot afford the costs. This can determine an unsatisfactory quality of the training programme.

The vocational training providers adapt their training offer to the demands of the labour market. For doing this, they discuss with companies representatives, with representatives of the local Agency for Employment and Vocational Training, with representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, in order to find out about the professions with many vacant jobs and not enough candidates.

Another important direction is the identification of new competencies needed as a result of rapid technological developments, in new fields such as: electronic commerce, real estate, public relations, human resource management.

The training providers also try to adapt their offer to the individual needs of their clients, perceived through press information, feedback from new trainees, talks with companies' representatives.

Most of the curricula are developed in co-operation with the County Agencies for Employment and Vocational Training. Sometimes, companies who contract training for their own personnel influence the content of the curricula. In curriculum design, the training providers always start from the training objectives and the occupational standards.

Curriculum development is mostly done by every trainer separately, even inside the same training organization, and there are no quality systems in place. Many of the curricula are circulated from one training provider to the other, being copied after the ones drafted by the National Agency for Employment and Vocational Training. Intellectual property rights are not taken into account.

This situation was meant to come to an end through the enforcement of the new law and through the elaboration of occupational standards for every profession. These standards were intended to ensure a coherent content nation-wide for occupations and qualifications, and to provide a methodological ground for structuring a flexible, modular, competence-based vocational training system.

Even if the curriculum for every profession should be based on the corresponding occupational standards, the existing occupational standards only refer to a small number of professions, for which there are currently organised training programmes.

3.9. Target groups policies

In Romania, unemployment is relatively high and it's still growing. Unemployed people have the obligation to attend vocational courses, but the course offer is not really adapted to the profiles of available jobs on the market. For example, unemployed people with higher education are encouraged to attend programming courses, but the percentage of them who succeed to get a job in the IT industry is very low. In the last few years, the Regional Training and Employment Agencies extended the available range of services offered to unemployed people, including counselling and career advice.

There are few special initiatives designed to enhance the employability of disabled people, and most of the times they originate from disabled people organisations or charity NGOs, and they are only supported by the public administration.

Regarding the PACE project in particular, we plan to focus on unskilled unemployed young people, and employed people in danger of losing their jobs because of their lack of competencies.

Many young people who graduate from a theoretical high school lack the necessary skills for obtaining a job. These high schools are usually meant for young people who want to continue their studies in a university. If, after high school graduation, they are either not accepted in a

university, or decide not to go on with their studies because of their financial situation or any other reasons, they find themselves in a very strange situation: even if their study years are above the average, they lack the practical skills and the qualifications for doing any qualified job.

One of our target groups are unskilled unemployed young people, who could have the chance to find a job if they would have some Information Technology and/or Business Administration skills. The unemployed people as a larger target group are taken into account, and so are people in danger to loose their jobs because their lack of particular skills. People with disabilities will be considered a priority.

Some of them will be considered because they are not able to pass a regular vocational certification, but the others could obtain the partial certification as a first step in acquiring a full certification. Sometimes, if they can prove adequate skills for getting hired, they have the chance to continue their training on-the-job.

Another problem we plan to address is the current ongoing activity transformation: the tools and procedures used few years ago are replaced by new ones, and the pace of change becomes more and more rapid. That's why the competencies of currently employed people have to be frequently updated, and sometimes this must happen in a very short period of time. We will also try to improve the people awareness' on the need for possessing a continuously updated competencies' portfolio.

4. IT AND BA CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

At the moment in Romania there are plenty of courses in Information Technology and Business Administration, offered by both public and private institutions. For the lower and medium level of education in IT, ECDL is now widely recognised as “the” certification. Most of the training centres adjusted their syllabi to the ECDL syllabus, even if they do not offer ECDL testing and certification. ECDL stands for “the European Computer Driving Licence” and is the result of the European joint efforts to define a standardised qualification, recognised by all the countries who adopted it. Any person who owns this certificate anywhere in Europe is expected to have at least the skills considered in this standard. The seven modules included in the ECDL certification process are:

- Basic Computer Skills
- File Management
- Word Processing
- Spreadsheets
- Databases
- Presentations
- Internet and Communication.

For Business Administration, there are plenty of certifications offered by very diverse institutions, but no generally agreed syllabus.

The law mentions that “the professional competencies acquired through other types of vocational training can be evaluated and certified by the National Board for Adult Vocational Training, and vocational competence certificates can be issued”. This indicates a possible legal procedure to be followed when applying for the accreditation of partial certifications in some well-defined domains.

Regarding Partial Certifications, they are not recognised at this moment in time. The only partial certificates issued are these of modular training programs, such as ECDL, which organise testing at the end of every module. The ECDL Foundation provides also the opportunity of obtaining an ECDL Start certificate, after passing a set of four tests- instead of the total of seven, considered to address the most basic skills (Basic Computer Skills, File Management, Word Processing, Internet and Communication).

Intermediary evaluations of the trainees' skills would probably become more popular if the possibility of obtaining partial certification would obtain recognition from the authorities.

Taking into account the current trend, the vocational training market will go through the following changes in the next few years:

- A shift from individual clients to big clients- companies
- A stronger accent on quality instead of costs
- VET will become more client centred
- More transparency, flexibility and equal opportunities for the training providers
- The establishment of a national standard in adults' VET.

4.1. AISTEDA's fields of interest

During a previous SOCRATES-Grundtvig project, AISTEDA was accredited as an ECDL Test Center. AISTEDA is obviously interested in working toward obtaining the recognition of partial certifications in the Information Technology field. We would like to focus not only on ECDL and similar programmes, but also on some new professions like Internet research, image and digital sound processing etc.

We think that a partial ECDL certification, together with a portfolio of applications could give an employer a better idea on the skills of the job candidate. Also, these basic skills could be combined with some others, in order to certify IT Administrators or IT Librarians.

For the Business Administration part, a short and efficient training in Internet research could be the source of a valuable competence, currently not available in many Romanian companies.

AISTEDA runs currently a post-secondary school for tourism and hostelry activities, set up to meet the needs for such training in our zone, where the natural potential for tourism is huge, but there's a lack of skilled people in this field. The school has recently received the operating authorisation from the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth. In the framework of the PACE project, AISTEDA intends to define and to submit for accreditation a partial certification for tourism workers.

In the near future, AISTEDA also intends to open a Managerial Development Centre for Tourism Services meant for tourism SMEs managers that could address partial certifications in rural tourism for hostelry (reception desk activities, administrating computer LANs, audio & video advertising, organizing room preparation activities). These include both IT and BA related certifications that could be taken into account.

The type of tourism with the most potential in the area is rural tourism. A lot of people have renovated their houses in the country-side in order to comply with rural tourism standards and are willing to attract tourists, but they lack any basic skills for providing services to costumers, marketing, accounting, advertising, not to speak about IT skills. We named this profile "tourism worker". These tourism workers could co-operate with online facilitators (profile targeted by C.A.R. Timisoara for accrediting partial certification) from rural tele-centres in order to advertise their offer and to receive and confirm reservations.

The Centre for the Study of Foreign Languages will offer language courses in Greek, Turkish, English, French and German low-level courses, teaching language skills for specific domains; practice-oriented Romanian language courses for foreigners are also included in the Centre's program.

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- The Information Network on Education in Europe - <http://www.eurydice.org>

SLOVENIA

1. INTRODUCTION

This document is a result of in-depth survey of documents, legislation, articles and data available on education system in Slovenia, emphasising the development and implementation of certification system, as well as from our involvement and cooperation with the key institutions in many national and international projects on vocational education and training (VET) reform in the last few years. In order to get additional and accurate information, we have contacted the main national certification authorities as the Centre for Vocational Education and Training (CPI), the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (MoLFSA) and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MoESS), as well as the Technical School Centre, Nova Gorica (TSCNG). Information, included in this survey are based on the interviews with some filed experts, as Mrs. Kunčič, responsible for vocational standards and vocational qualifications at CPI, and Mrs. Hodak, VET teacher and coordinator at TSCNG. Both mentioned experts contributed an article to this document as well.

2. THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SLOVENIA

2.1. *Developments and framework structure*

The Slovenian education system has gone through many changes in the last 15 years. The main disadvantages of the past system were centralisation and regulation of education by the state, not involving social partners and schools and thus not corresponding to the labour market demands, as well as to EU standards. The main reform was done with the introduction of The White Paper on Education in the Republic Slovenia in 1996 with accompanied legislation. It has established a new framework and introduced the following principles: transparency and accessibility of education to all; legal neutrality; democracy, autonomy and equal opportunities; and precedence of quality of learning over the accumulation of facts. This principles and main objectives set are defined in the legislation and individual education programmes.

The education system is developed and implemented by the MoESS (responsible for confirming education programmes), municipalities, the National Councils of Experts (responsible for providing expert consultancy on developments in education), and other institutions as the National Education Institute, CPI, Slovenian Adult Centre, etc.

The current educational system in Slovenia can be divided in the following levels:

1. Pre-school education (age of 1 – 6);
2. Compulsory basic education – primary and lower secondary education (age of 6 – 15);
3. Upper secondary education (age of 15 – 19);
4. Higher education (age of 19 – 25);
5. Post –graduate study (age of 23 – 27);
6. Music education (age of 6 – 19);
7. Adult education.

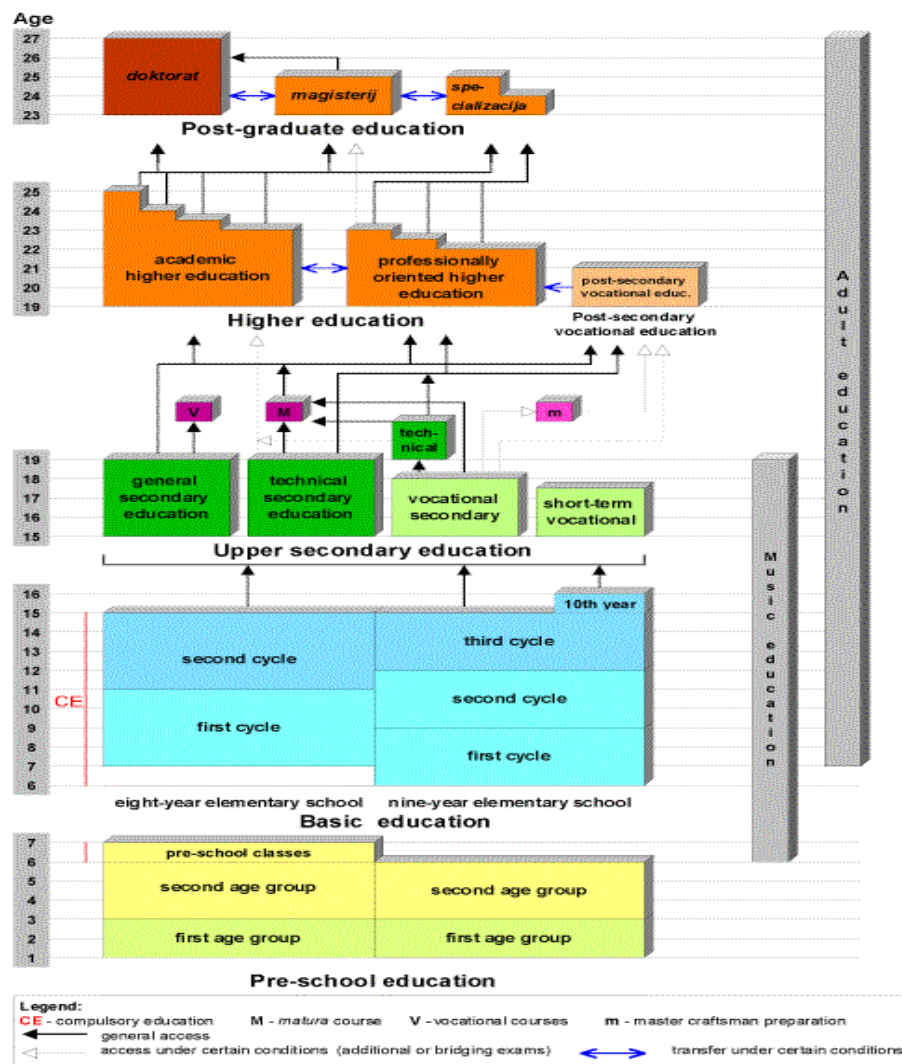


Figure 1: Structure of educational system in Slovenia. Source, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

2.2. Structure and organisation of initial education

The basic education in Slovenia is compulsory and lasts for 9 years. It is provided by public primary schools all over Slovenia. More than 90% of pupils continue their education at upper secondary level of education.

The upper secondary general education is provided by general education secondary schools, called "gimnazija". The education lasts for 4 years and finishes with an external examination in five subjects, called "matura". After passing the matura, students can enrol in higher education studies, either in a university or a post-secondary vocational programme.

The upper secondary vocational and technical education and training offers wide a range of programmes at the different levels of education, they are:

- Short-term vocational programmes, which last for two and a half year, ending with final examination and providing semi-skilled workers. Pupils can enrol in these programmes after finishing primary school, or after finishing at least 6 years of

primary schooling. After completing the programme, student may enter the labour market or enter the first year of upper secondary school;

- Three year vocational programmes, provided by VET schools or in cooperation with employers (dual system). They are intended to provide qualifications at skilled worker level in industrial, crafts and service sectors. They last for 3 years and are ending with final examination. They enable students to enter labour market or continue education in two year vocational –technical programmes, which end with so called “poklicna matura” (acquiring qualification on the level of the secondary technical school);
- Technical vocational programmes, which last for four year, ending with “poklicna matura” or final examination, which enables entrance to post-secondary VET programmes. They are thus leading to technician and middle management positions, and are designed mostly for post-secondary vocational programmes.

The upper secondary VET programmes are carried out by many VET public schools, which are locally dispersed. Although they recently start to cooperate and establish school centres, cooperation between them is still rather weak.

The VET system in Slovenia offers also master craftsman, foreman and managerial preparatory courses and examinations. According to respective legislation any person starting to run her/his own craft business, as well as tutors of apprentices, have to pass these exams. As the precondition for applying to master craftsman and foreman examination, the candidate has to complete three year VET school and must have at least three years of working experiences or has to complete post-secondary VET school and must have at least one year of working experiences. The examinations for master craftsmen are over the responsibility of the Chamber of Crafts, the examinations for foreman and managers are over the responsibility of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The post-secondary VET education is provided by the post-secondary vocational colleges. These programmes last for two year and are composed of at least 40% of practical training in a company. The programme is finished with the vocational diploma exam, which enable the student to work in specific occupation or continue education at the higher education institution – university.

2.3. Structure and organisation of higher education

Higher education in Slovenia is provided at state universities (i.e. faculties, art academies and professional colleges) and higher education institutions, which are not members of university (i.e. public and private professional colleges and private faculties). The universities and single private faculties offer academic undergraduate education, lasting from 4 to 6 years and professionally oriented courses, lasting usually 3 years. The last one is offered also by the professional colleges. Both types of courses lead to diploma. After acquiring the diploma, one can enrol to post-graduate course (1 to 2 years), leading to specialist degree, to a master degree course (2 years) or doctoral degree (4 years).

2.4. Structure and organisation of adult education

The reform of VET in Slovenia has taken into account life-long principle as well, establishing legal grounds for education of adults. The present system is offering formal as well as non-formal ways of education of adults. They are offered by peoples' universities (“ljudska univerza”), schools, in-company centres, Slovenian Adult Education Centre, as well as many private organisations, offering training courses mainly for foreign languages, computer skills, and others.

A special attention is given to unemployed people in offering many non-formal (not the school based) ways of education. More information can be found in the paragraph 3.9.

3. THE VET & CERTIFICATION SYSTEM IN SLOVENIA

3.1. *Historical background and developments*

The new legislation (adopted in 1996/97) defined new framework for development and implementation of VET in Slovenia, in order to increase flexibility and accessibility of VET to all, to strengthen involvement of social partners, to adjust education to labour market demands and to achieve comparability with EU standards.

The modernisation of VET system in the last century was very demanding, exposed to the pressures from the changing labour market. The evaluations shows that in spite of introducing new elements into VET system, the structural inconsistencies on the labour market keeps increasing, integration of new occupations and qualification standards remains low as well as mobility of students in the VET system and transition from school to work and to higher levels of education has been limited.

At the end of 90s of the last century Slovenia thus started to consider about other solutions, one of them was further elaboration of the national qualification system.

In 2001 Slovenia has adopted the new “Starting points for preparation of educational programmes of lower and middle vocational and middle professional education”, introducing the following essential novelties in the VET:

- Opening up of the curricula (up to 20 %);
- Modularisation of the programmes, enabling the acquisition of full and partial qualifications;
- The integration of general, professional and practical knowledge;
- Equalisation of education standards for school-based and the dual-form of vocational education.

The novelties mentioned above are currently piloted in five selected VET schools, in order to introduce them in VET system at the beginning of the next school year.

One of the most important novelty introduced is modularisation of the programmes, mentioned above, which would enable acquisition of partial certification (partial qualification) by achieved modules. The preparation of methodology and guidelines for modularisation is currently taking place by nominated expert group, led by CPI.

3.2. *The legal framework*

The National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Act (Official Journal of RS, No. 81/3708/2000) introduces certification system, which provides access to nationally recognised certificates for NVQ enabling recognition of prior learning and experiences of adults. Adopting this law, Slovenia has made a step further on implementing life-long learning principles.

The NVQ is defined as a working vocational or professional qualification, required for an occupation or individual sets of tasks within an occupation. Individual may obtain NVQ by a) achieving vocational or professional education; b) by completing parts of educational programmes; c) by completing vocational training and advanced training programmes and d) by meeting the standards of professional knowledge and skills.

The NVQ may be acquired by choosing two ways - the school way or the certification way (assessment of prior-learning and experiences of adults), but the basis for both is elaboration of occupational profiles and relevant occupational standards. The school way leads to education and vocational qualification but the certification way leads directly only to vocational qualification.

The NVQ Act is accompanied with several regulations as The Regulation on Method and Procedure of Assessment and Certification of NVQ (Official Journal of RS, No. 97-4339/2003)

and The Regulation on Procedure on Acquiring NVQ (Official Journal of RS, No. 017-01-015/99-005), some of them currently revised.

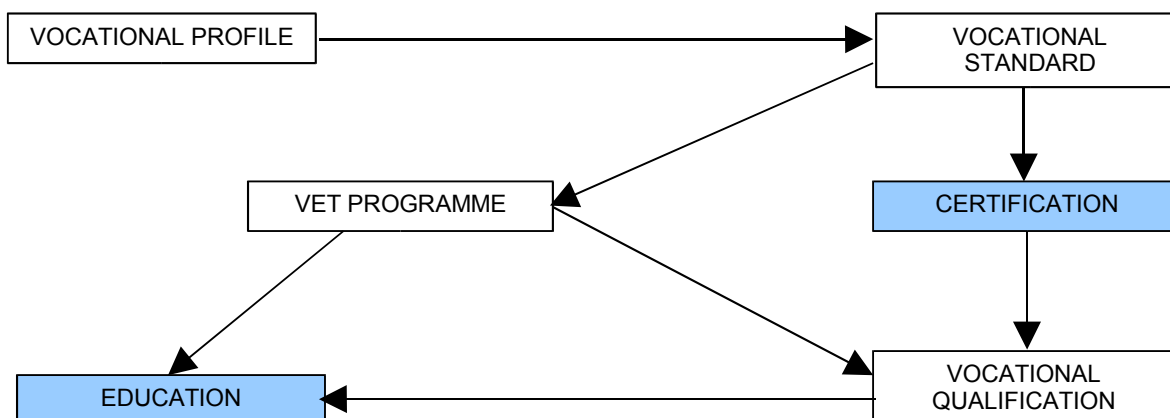


Figure 2: The structure of NQS. Source: Svetlik, I.: National Qualification System – The case of Slovenia, European Training foundation, Ljubljana, October 2001

3.3. Financial framework

The organisation and implementation of VET in public schools is funded by the MoESS from the national budget. The schools are obliged to report to MoESS on the number of students and systematization of jobs by categories according to corresponding norms and standards. If the latest is confirmed by the MoESS, the school receives funds, based on the number of classes and systematization of jobs for the salaries and running costs. The education of adults is also partly covered by the national budget according to special plans and budgets, adopted by the Government.

However, the adult education (and other non-formal ways of education) is financed differently, by individuals, employers and also by the state. The different ministries, as MoESS, MoLFSA, Ministry of Economy, etc. are co-financing the education of adults under different measures and programmes. According to collective agreements, the employers are obliged to cover direct and indirect costs of education and training of their employees, when employers are attending the education or training on their request. Individuals are financing their education and training by themselves, when training or education is not initiated by their employers.

According to data, the employer's funds are the most important for financing employees training and education. These funds are increasing with the size of the company. However, there are no funds of social partners for education and training of their employees. The only existing private fund at the moment is in the craft sector.

3.4. Organizations

The main ministries, responsible for NQS are the MoESS and the MoLFSA. MoESS has the overall responsibility of school-based formal education. It is responsible for budget and control of entire education system, as well as for approval and publishing the education and training programmes and for setting the standards for education and training.

MoLFSA is responsible for certification system. It prepares relevant legislation, methodologies, approves occupational standards, nominates the commissions for certification of NVQs, etc.

Other bodies, involved in the implementation of the procedure for obtaining NVQ are:

- The National Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for VET ("Strokovni svet RS za poklicno izobraževanje" - SSPIU) is the national body, mainly responsible for

proposing the catalogues of standards for professional knowledge and skills to the MoLFS, adopting methodology of the catalogues of standards for professional knowledge and skills, offering expert assistance and proposing training programmes for obtaining licence for assessors.

- Chambers (as organised interest groups) and responsible ministries (for activities for which chambers are not organised) are responsible for drafting the proposals for catalogues of standards for professional knowledge and skills, proposing the members of assessment and certification commissions, providing the conditions for the assessment and certification, and proposing necessary changes to the catalogues of standards for professional knowledge and skills.
- CPI is responsible for developmental, advisory and expert work in the development of standards in the area of NVQ and in the formation of catalogues of professional knowledge and skills. It has established the National Information Centre for Vocational Qualifications (future National Reference Point), which offers the information on vocational and professional education, certification system, education programmes, occupational standards, catalogues of professional knowledge and skills, etc. It operates in close cooperation with the Employment Service of Slovenia, Statistical Office of Slovenia, Slovenian Adult Education Centre and other expert national and international organisations.
- National Examination Centre (Državni izpitni center) is responsible for developing of methodologies for assessment and certification of standards for professional knowledge and skills, organising the training for assessors and members of certification commissions, awarding licences and monitoring the work of members of assessment and certification commissions.
- Registered organisations for organisation of assessment and certification of NVQ

Organisation of assessment and certification of NVQ is carried out by registered institutions as chambers, schools, enterprise education centres, and other type of organisation, determined by the catalogue of knowledge and skills (e.g. TSCNG is registered for the assessment and certification of web page producer).

3.5. Qualification systems

Occupational standards, leading to NVQ, defines the code and the name of occupation, level of proficiency of work, competence, and field of work, main tasks, knowledge and skills.

Qualification standards are prepared for the following levels:

- 3 – Lower vocational qualification/education (ISCED level 3C);
- 4 – Middle vocational qualification/education (ISCED level 3C);
- 5 – Middle technical qualification/education (ISCED level 3B);
- 6 – Higher non-university technical qualification/education (ISCED level 5B).

Occupational standards are replacing so called “nomenklatura”, which included the list of vocational standards by occupational fields, defining vocational and professional level of education, and did not enable fast (re-)qualifications of people. (“Nomenklatura” is used by Statistical Office of Slovenia, as well as for defining salary grades).

The initiative for new occupational standard may be given by anybody to the CPI, who starts the preparation of the proposal, if it meets the requirements. The main requirements for the new occupation is stability and long-lasting, widespread, appearance in different work situations, employability of significant number of people and is comparable with occupations on foreign labour markets.

Development and modernisation of occupational standards in respective field is the main task of nominated field committee (e.g. field committee for business and administration), composed of the representatives of chambers, ministries and trade unions. It may also propose modification or development of new job profile, occupational standard or catalogue to the responsible chamber or ministry, who nominates expert group, responsible for statement on adjustment of proposal with national and EU legislation and with labour market demands.

After the positive opinion on the proposal by the expert board, the SSPIU submits it to the MoLFSA for approval.

The knowledge and skills required for acquiring NVQ are determined by catalogue of standards for professional knowledge and skills. The catalogues of professional knowledge and skills, needed for certification of NVQ, are developed on the base of occupational standard.

The proposal for catalogue of knowledge and skills is developed by the responsible chamber (or by responsible ministry for activities for which the chambers are not organised) or by CPI in close cooperation with professional and vocational associations and trade unions.

The initiative for the adaptation of catalogue of professional knowledge and skills may be proposed by anyone to the CPI and field committees decide on relevance of initiative.

Expert board, nominated by SSPIU, is responsible for coordination of the proposed catalogue in line with the established needs for vocational qualification, international comparability and compliance with the Slovene legal system and EU regulations. Proposed catalogue is determined and published by the MoLFSA.

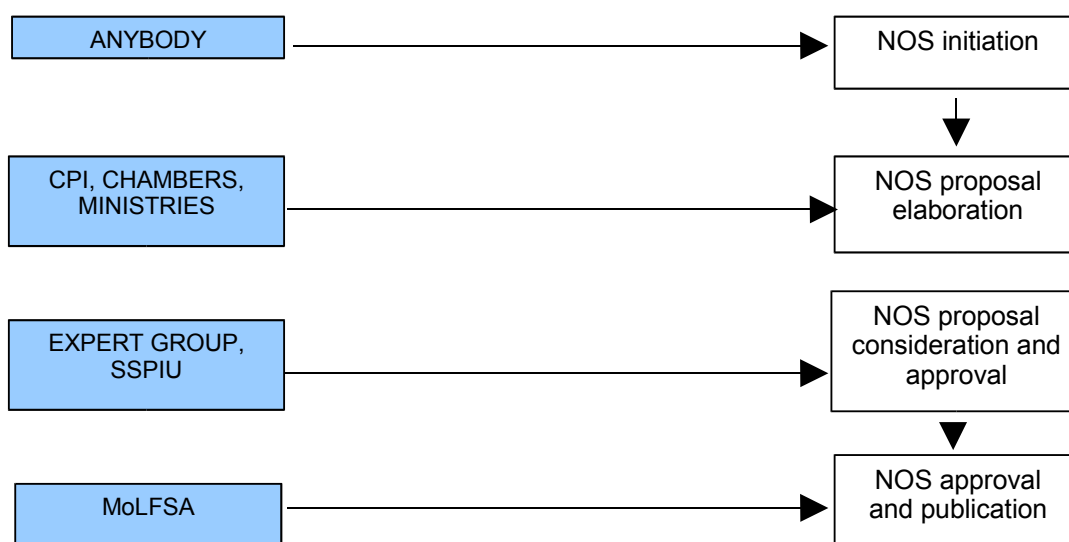


Figure 3: The national occupational standard (NOS) initiation and approval procedure. Source: Svetlik, I.: National Qualification System – The case of Slovenia, European Training foundation, Ljubljana, October 2001

3.6. Quality standards / assurance

The responsibility of quality control of formal (school based) and non-formal (non-school based) publicly recognised training lies within respective ministries. The responsible ministries define standards (i.e. material conditions, qualifications requirements of staff, etc.) for carrying out formal and non-formal ways of training. The compliance of the training programme with the standards is checked only in the phase of verification or official approval of the programme.

The quality of training results is assured also by involving social partners in the development and approval of occupational standards and catalogues of knowledge and skills in the certification system, as well as in their involvement in formal education and training.

The quality is assured by external examinations, as well. Quality control mechanism is thus combination of inputs and outputs.

However, there is no quality control mechanism assured for non-formal non-regulated training, which are mainly regulated by the supply and demand on the labour market.

3.7. Assessment procedures

The MoLFSA is, as already mentioned, responsible for assessment and certification of non-formal and informal learning and work experiences, in order to provide national recognised certificate. The first step in certification process of NVQ is submitted application of individual to authorised and registered organisation by MoLFSA. Assessment and certification of individual is carried out by the nominated commission. The members of commission must obtain special licence, issued by the National Examination Centre. NVQ may be thus reach a) by certification - direct assessment of professional knowledge, skills and abilities determined in the catalogue, b) by assessment of candidate's personal portfolio that consists of different documents that prove skills and knowledge defined in the catalogue and were acquired in formal or non-formal learning and c) in school - on the basis of successfully finished educational programme.

The forms, duration of assessment and the composition of commission may be adapted to the persons with special needs.

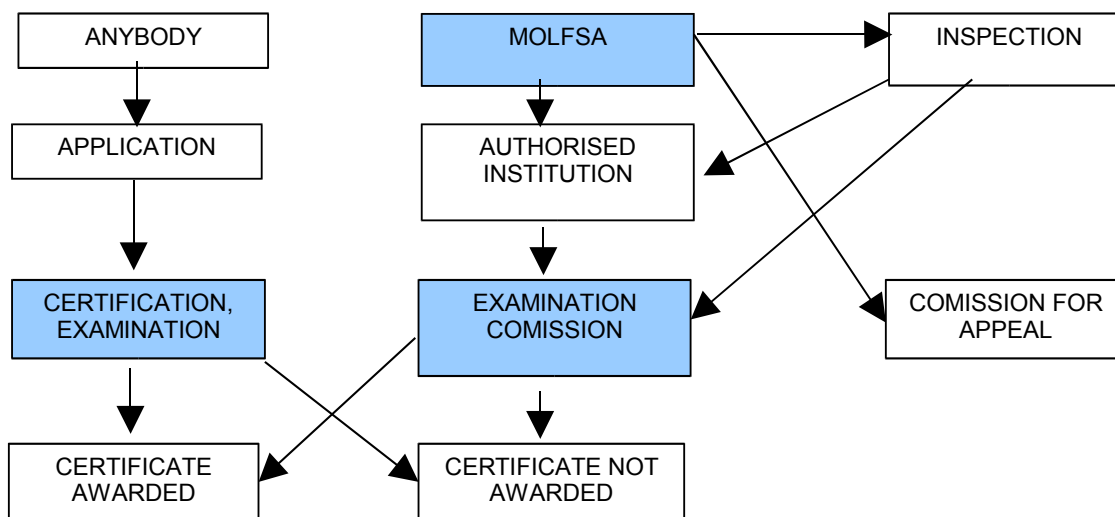


Figure 4: The certification procedure. Source: Svetlik, I.: National Qualification System – The case of Slovenia, European Training foundation, Ljubljana, October 2001

3.8. Practice of VET (B. Kunčič, CPI)

The field of VET is constantly exposed to changes arising from developments in different business branches, new technologies, new organisations of work and finally from the position of a certain branch in the market.

From the points of view of both employers and educators, it is therefore very important to search for more flexible and transparent elements and ways on which VET can be based. When developing occupational standards, the CPI has addressed the need for better transparency of occupational qualifications. This is also a condition strongly emphasised by employers. At the same time, the transparency of occupational qualifications is extremely important for the free flow of labour within the European Union, which is one of the basic stipulations of the common European policy.

Originally, occupational standards were developed as a basis for the development of a system of verification and accreditation of knowledge and skills acquired outside the formal school system, i.e. through work, experiences etc. For this reason it was necessary to develop a basis which would enable an assessment of the skills and knowledge acquired at work and to establish which knowledge and skills an individual still lacks in order to acquire an occupational

qualification within the system of National Occupational Qualifications. Later on it was proved that this is also a very good basis for the preparation of educational programmes.

Initial VET in many fields of industry, especially in technical fields, is becoming less popular among young students. That is the reason why schools and industry are more and more focusing on adults who need to acquire higher qualification level or have no formal qualification and need to acquire one.

Many of those have worked for years as unskilled workers but have gained in these years a lot of working experience and professional skills that could be assessed and acknowledged through this system of assessment of prior learning. With this system they could get some formal qualification and improve their employability since their skills are now formally acknowledged.

On the other hand companies can raise qualification level in the company.

3.9. Target group policies

Slovenia is currently offering many non-formal training programmes for unemployed, among which are:

- Trainings, aimed at increased employability (planning of occupational carrier, effective such of employment), which include information and motivation courses, workshops on looking for job and workshop for discovering occupational goals;
- Courses for personal development, which include job clubs, programmes of training and advanced training, practical assessment and on-the-job training.

The emphasise is put to disabled groups as well. The Employment Service of Slovenia is providing different trainings for disabled, in order to improve their employability. A rehabilitation plan is made for each included disabled person, in cooperation with rehabilitation councillor, the medical counselling service and the expert commission for determining the disability of person.

3.9.1. Example of good practice: TSCNG developments in introduction of certification (A. Hodak)

TSC NG is one of the five biggest VET centres in Slovenia. It offers a wide variety of training and educational programmes for youth aged from 15-19 as well as for adults in the following technical fields: Electro-technical, Electronic and Energetic; Computer Engineering; Mechanical Engineering; and Transport Engineering. In the last years we introduced many modernisations in our VET system in order to adjust VET programmes to the needs of labour market. We are also a registered institution for the assessment and certification of several NVQs.

We have been active in international projects since its establishment in 1950, however in the last 3 years also in the EU programmes such as Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates.

Owing to cooperation in the past and appearing of new labour market demands the TSC NG decided to renew the cooperation with the certain industrial subjects in our region in order to organize the training and education which correspond to demands. The companies themselves showed their interest in establishing a strong partnership, too. They are aware that today knowledge is the basic driving force and a basis for the efficiency and security of each person. They want to progress through continuous learning and sharing of know-how.

Our main target group are mostly people who already have working and life experiences on the similar vocational field and would like to improve their knowledge, as well as to check and verify their knowledge and to be certified with NVQ. NVQs are very interesting also for unemployed people and for all those who would like to be re-qualified to the new vocational field. We think that there are also many dropouts who could find in this way of training a much easier way to verify their knowledge and skills without attending the educational programmes.

On the regional and national level as the registered institution for certification and assessment of NVQs we would like to play an important role, such as:

- To compose a wider offer of occupations,
- To share our knowledge to people who are willing to accept it,
- To reduce unemployment especially a long-term unemployment,
- To increase the awareness of the importance of vocational training,
- To offer new chances for disabled and social excluded people,
- To devote special attention to workers in the sectors undergoing restructuring who are threatened by loss of employment, especially those low skilled or with unsuitable vocational qualifications;
- We are also aware of the fact that there is only a low share of adults participating in education and training; the certification system gives the opportunity for adults to change their minds about life long learning.

The certification system brings many priorities, such as:

- The targeted participants are enabled to obtain knowledge, skills and/or work experiences that are necessary to improve their employment possibilities;
- The possibility of the immediate verification of knowledge, skills and capacities;
- It enables the supplementation of one's formal education;
- It enables to complete the educational programmes in parts and not all at once;
- It is very suitable for the people who work and for those who are unemployed;
- VQ is recognised on the national level;
- There is also the possibility of recognition on the international level.

As the inquiry differs from town to town and from region to region we decided to apply for the procedure for registration of assessment and certification of NVQ. We were registered for organisation of assessment and certification for the following NVQs:

- Web site producer,
- Web site designer,
- CNC operator,
- Welder (plamenski varilec/ka, spajalec, ročno obločni/na varilec/ka, TIG varilec).

According to the estimations the most interesting and wanted NVQ at the moment is a web site producer. Namely, there are many candidates who have very good experiences in producing web sites but they don't have the certificate to prove their skills and knowledge.

Although we are not an initiator for the web producer and web designer NVQs we have experiences in certification procedure in the field of mechanical engineering. In order to prepare an initiative for a new NVQ we formed a project group (of teachers for professional fields and the experts from the firm). A key feature in preparing an initiative was the effectiveness of procedures by means of gathering the views of learners, staff and employers. Namely, there are about 400 employees in Iskra Avtoelektrika Company who actually are skilled but didn't finish their vocational training years ago. Those employees want their knowledge and skills to be evaluated, to complete their vocational training and be involved in advanced training programme in order to obtain the NVQ. The initiative was proposed and introduced to The Centre for vocational training and education (CPI) in Ljubljana and to other invited representatives of Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Slovenian Chamber of Crafts. The representatives agreed that the initiatives were well prepared and argued with large industrial needs and this is the main reason we believe that the further negotiation should bring an agreement about accepting the initiative in the form of NVQ. Up to this step of the certification procedure we didn't identify any gaps between legal framework and practical experiences.

We were approved as a registered institution for the organisation of assessment and certification for the web site producer and web site designer only a month ago. Now we are preparing a commission which will award the certificates. This is also the reason why there have still no been any certificates awarded.

There are no high needs to acquaint a certificate for web page producer. Namely, people who want to be certified already possess knowledge and skills for producing web sites. They only want their knowledge to be assessed in order to have a document when searching for a job.

The labour market needs after this job profile is quite large in the big companies as well in SMEs. These work places are usually occupied by economists or mechanical engineering technicians. In this year we expect to award about 30-40 certificates and this number should increase in the next years to 80 candidates per year.

In the future we shall continue to prepare new initiatives especially in the field of ICT. The first initiative will combine two fields informatics and economy/marketing (organizacija poslovanja z IKT podprtim sistemom/management organisation assisted by ICT system).

4. IT AND BA CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES

4.1. Business Administration (BA)

In the field of business administration there are many formal (school) programmes available, especially on the middle vocational and professional educational level (i.e. technical and vocational secondary), but none for lower levels of education (i.e. short-term vocational).

Data from the year 2000/2001 shows the highest share (50%) of enrolment of adults in the formal trainings in the field of business administration and economics, as well as the highest increase of enrolment. The highest interest is showed also in non-formal ways of trainings in the respective fields.

According to the data available, there are no non-formal ways for acquiring NVQ or certificate in this field, although there were some attempts in the last year(s).

The MoLFSA has namely together with the Institute for Disabled Youth (Zavod za invalidno mladino), proposed a new job profile "assistant administrator" ("pomožni administrator") for the lower level of education. Occupational standard (part of it is translated and attached) has been accepted and approved, but procedure did not continue into development of catalogue of professional knowledge and skills and later on to certification. The analysis of the labour market demands namely showed, that there is no need for such a profile, which would mean non-employability of people with this certificate.

Labour market will, in our opinion, indicate the need to develop certificates for certain profiles also in this field, but on the middle educational level. At the moment the employers are not keen on employing people with "non-school" acquired education, especially not on the lower level and for disadvantaged groups. Based on these conclusions, we decided not to select any profile from this field, as it would probably not be possible to achieve any tangible results during the project implementation.

4.2. Information Technology (IT)

Developments in information (communication) technology have increased rapidly in the last years and accordingly to the needs on the labour market for the profiles in this field. The development of new profiles in IT is one of the top priorities in Slovenia, as there is the lack of education programmes as well as skilled people in this field.

The share of adult participants in the formal trainings in the field of computers, together with electrical engineering was 4,7% in the year 2000/2001. The share of participants in non-formal training in the field of computing (together with sciences, mathematics) is 14%.

In the last years there are many non-formal ways for acquiring basic computer skills, as well as ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence), but this type of non-formal trainings is not certified.

Therefore, Slovenia has recently accepted many occupational standards for IT, which leads to acquiring NVQ or certificate. These are for the following profiles:

- On the middle vocational level (i.e. IV. level): software administrator (“vzdrževalec programske opreme”), hardware administrator (“vzdrževalec računalniške strojne opreme”) and ICT administrator (“skrbnik informacijske in komunikacijske tehnologije”). The Chamber of Commerce and Industry is currently initiating preparation of the catalogues of knowledge and skills, which lead to acquiring NVQ.
- On the middle technical level (i.e. V. level): web page designer (“oblikovalec spletnih strani”), web page producer (“izdelovalec spletnih strani”), technical co-operator for programme applications and databases (“strokovni sodelavec za programske aplikacije in podatkovne baze”) and technical co-operator for computer systems and networks (“strokovni sodelavec za računalniške sisteme in omrežja”). The catalogues of knowledge and skills (available only in Slovene), as well as selection of institutions, responsible for assessment and certification of these profiles, are already approved. The translation of competences, fields of work, key responsibilities, skills and knowledge, defined in occupational standards for web page producer, are attached.

There is no need indicated on the labour market to develop occupational standards for profiles on a lower level as Slovenia currently does not have qualified people for IT on a lower level; therefore the occupational standards developed are for the middle level of education, including wide range of tasks, from lower up to middle level of knowledge demands.

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SPAIN

1. INTRODUCTION

The following report has been written by the Department of Training and the Department of Information and Advice of COGAMI, with several years of experience in designing, organizing and implementing vocational training activities as well as in providing information dealing with education and training.

Information has been collected from the said experience, legislation and bibliography research, as well as from a series of organizations participating in the advisory group set to monitor and follow up the project development in Spain. This Group members are three trade unions (CIGA, CCOO, UGT), two employers organizations (Galician Confederation of Employers and the Chamber of Commerce from Santiago), and two public administrations (the Galician Ministries of Education and of Employment, Labour and Social Issues). All them were represented by experts in training and education.

2. THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SPAIN

The Vocational Education and Training (VET) system in Spain is regulated by a series of laws and decrees. The laws are issued by the Spanish Central Government, and they are then implemented in every Autonomy by means of decrees.

The Educational Law is called the “Fundamental Law for Educational Quality” (LOCE), and was issued in December 2002. After the government change in March 2004, significant changes are expected.

It is organized as follows:

a) Kindergarten or Pre-school

It is volunteer for the families and addressed to until-3-years-old children.

b) Child Education

It is also volunteer and free for the families; for children from 3 to 6 years old. It aims at promoting the children’s physical, intellectual, affective, social and moral development.

c) Primary Education

It is compulsory and split into six courses (from 6 to 12 years old).

d) Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO)

It is a complement to the previous one, from 12 to 16 years old. It makes possible access to:

- when finished successfully (Graduated Title): Upper Secondary Education or Medium Level Professional Training
- when finished unsuccessfully, Programmes for Professional Initiation

After every course, it is decided if a student goes to the following or must repeat the one just finished.

e) Programmes for Introduction to Work

From 16 years old (or 15 exceptionally). They last for 2 courses, and succeeding in one of these programmes gives the right to get the Certificate in ESO, which makes access to Upper Secondary Education or Medium Level Professional Training possible.

f) Upper Secondary Education (Bachiller)

It can be accessed by students with the ESO Certificate. It lasts for two academic courses. To get the Bachiller Certificate, the positive evaluation of all subjects is necessary, as well as to pass the Bachiller General Test.

It gives the possibility to access University or Higher Level Professional Training (from 18 years old).

g) Medium Level Professional Training

It is required to be older than 16 and have the ESO Graduated Certificate. It makes access to Higher Level Professional Training possible.

h) Higher Level Professional Training

For accessing, it is necessary to hold the Bachiller Title or, exceptionally, to pass an access test.

i) University

University studies are split into 4 different levels:

- First level (short level): courses last for 2 or 3 years. They can be carriers in themselves or part of a longer one
- First and second university level (long level): they last for 4 or 5 years (6 in the case of Medicine) and give the right to become Bachelor, Engineer or Architect
- Only second university level: it lasts for 2 years and can be accessed by those who have finished a career or at least the first level
- Third university level: it is for those who wish to become doctors.

A chart showing a scheme of the Spanish Educational System is provided in Appendix 1 to this report.

3. THE VET & CERTIFICATION SYSTEM IN SPAIN

VET is coordinated by the Spanish General Council of Vocational Training. The Central and Autonomies Governments and the Social Partners are represented in it.

VET can be provided by private and public training organizations, by companies, social organizations, etc whenever they fulfil the requirements stated to provide officially “recognized” training.

Professional qualification is understood as the group of significant competences regarding employment, gained during formal and non-formal training processes, or labour experience.

3.1. Historical development

The promotion of Vocational Training in Spain started during the second half of the XVIII century, focused on technical training and supported by models of guild learning, artisan workshops and the then so-called “Royal Factories”. This was followed by the “technical schools” (in sectors such as textile, navigation or commerce) and the “schools of general principles” (related to general and base training).

During the XIX century, the first “schools of arts and professions” were created, as well as the “professional schools” depending on a religious order.

At the beginning of the last century, a network of vocational schools started to spread throughout Spain, with the “industrial schools”, “work schools” and “institutes of professional guidance”, mainly set in the most developed areas.

In 1928, the first legislation dealing with vocational training was issued: the Statute for Setting Industrial Schools, by the Ministry of Labour.

In 1955, the first law regarding vocational training was issued by the Ministry of Education (though it also affected others, such as the Ministry of Labour): “Law for Professional Training”. In the same year, the first “Labour Universities” were opened, and the specific law to regulate them, in 1959.

In 1964, the Ministry of Labour started the Programme of Labour Professional Promotion, which started to promote Occupational Training.

The General Law of Education of 1970 introduced a modern and innovative vocational training. But at the time of developing it, some of the decrees reduced its flexibility, adaptation capacity to changes...

In 1990, the new General Law of Education introduced a series of very innovative aspects, which gave place to a new concept of vocational training, able to adapt to the foreseen changes affecting economy, technology and society in general. It also included the obligation of spending ¼ of the training period in working centres.

In 1986, the General Council of Professional Training was created and elaborated the I National Programme of Vocational Training. The Programme run from 1993 to 1996 and gave a global approach of the vocational training, based on initial, formal and occupational. It also elaborated the Qualifications Catalogue as well as the Professional Certificates corresponding to Occupational Training.

The Council was restructured in 1997, being its members the State administration, social partners and the Autonomies Governments. This new Council issued the II National Plan of Vocational Training 1998-2002, now based on initial, occupational and ongoing. It involved the creation of the national system of professional qualifications and its corresponding National Institute, as well as the identification of competences and qualification by non-formal ways.

3.2. Legal Framework

Due to the Spanish administrative organization, VET legislation is a responsibility of both the State and the Autonomy bodies. The following ones are the main laws and orders regulating VET.

3.2.1. At Spanish level

- Fundamental Law 5/2002 of Qualifications and VET
- Royal Decree 1128/2003 to regulate the National Professional Qualifications Catalogue
- Royal Decree 1506/2003 to establish the guidelines for Competence Certificates
- Royal Decree 1046/2003 to regulate the subsystem of Ongoing VET
- The State Plan for VET
- The Fundamental Law 10/2002 for the Quality of Education
- Royal Decree 290/2004 to regulate “labour enclaves” as a measure to promote the employment of people with disabilities

3.2.2. At the level of Galicia Autonomy

- Decree 93/1999 to create and regulate the Galician Qualifications Institute

- Decree 110/1999 to create and regulate the Galician Council of VET
- Decree 325/2003 to authorize and regulate the Integral VET centres in Galicia
- Galician Plan of VET

3.3. Financial Framework

Training funding is public almost totally. Most of the times, Regular VET takes place in public centres; if it is delivered in private schools, they must have a special agreement with the government, which includes co-funding.

Occupational and Ongoing VET can take place in companies, private training centres or facilities belonging to social partners or others, whenever they have been registered in the administration as training providers. These organizations can apply for funding to deliver training or can do it themselves (it sometimes happens in the case of big companies).

3.4. Organizations

In Spain and Galicia, the decisions regarding VET and qualifications are a responsibility of the Ministries of Education and of Labour and Social Matters. Depending on or participated by them, there are several organizations with a direct involvement in the issue:

- Spanish and Galician VET Councils: directly depending on the public administration, they must elaborate the VET plans for their respective territories; carry out the ongoing evaluation, follow up and update of the said plans; suggest recommendations regarding VET, qualifications, guidance...; reporting about any issue about VET submitted by the administration. The Ministries of Education and Labour and Social Matters, representatives of employers and trade unions are represented in it.
- National and Galician Council and Institute of Qualifications: also depending on the public administration, their commitments are watching the implementation of the National Qualification System, following it and suggesting recommendations; identifying professional competences, mainly the specific of the Spanish and Galician labour markets respectively; promoting the study and implementation of the new professions and employment beds; establishing the criteria that must be fulfilled by the evaluation of competences and the proceedings to give accreditations; implementing the qualification system included in the VET National Programmes.
- Galician Agency for Integrated Management, Quality and Evaluation: recently promoted by the Galician Ministry of Education in the framework of the Galician Plan for VET, it is a specific technical instrument to promote quality in training and coordinate the actions implemented by all bodies involved in training and qualifications management, as well as the integrated VET centres and relationships between training providers and employers.
- FORCEM, is the Spanish Foundation for Ongoing VET, created under agreement of the so-called Tripartite Foundation (the Administration, employers representatives and trade unions), who are in charge of its control. Its role is promoting and disseminating Ongoing VET among workers and employers, managing grants for ongoing training, as well as its subsequent follow-up and technical control.
- As to training provision, there are a lot of organizations, public and private: the different administrations (local, Autonomy, central), businesses, Social Actors, training organizations, etc.

3.5. Qualification systems

The Spanish National Qualification System depends and is managed by the National Institute of Qualifications, which members are representatives of the Central government, Social Partners and the Autonomies Governments (by means of their own Autonomy Qualification Institutes or Agencies, which have a similar internal structure). This Institute is in charge of identifying and defining new professional competences and profiles (or updating the existing ones), as well as incorporating them to the National System or Catalogue.

Training providers also have the possibility to influence the Catalogue qualifications, as they can provide “Experimental Training”, which can consist on a new qualification. Afterwards, it is assessed by the corresponding Autonomy Council and if it is considered suitable, the new qualification is immediately included in the Catalogue.

3.5.1. The Professional Catalogue

Professional Qualifications are ordered according to qualification levels and the so-called Professional Families.

There are 26 Professional Families. The division is made depending on professional competence affinities required to fulfil a job. One of these Families is “Administration and Management”, which corresponds to Business Administration, Clerical Work, Office Work and similar.

Regarding qualification levels, they are five:

- Level 1: competence in a reduced number of uncomplicated activities, being the required theoretical and practice knowledge limited.
- Level 2: it requires knowledge about the activity technical and scientific fundamentals, as well as capacities to understand and apply processes, sometimes autonomously.
- Level 3: it requires the knowledge of different techniques and scientific fundamentals to be applied in a series of professional activities, as well as evaluating the process issues and its economical involvement.
- Level 4: it means competence in a wide range of complex activities which require the combination of technical, scientific, economical or organizational variables in order to plan actions, to define or develop projects, processes, products or services.
- Level 5: high competence in a many complex activities carried out in many different environments. Much individual autonomy. Frequent responsibility in assigning resources, analysing, diagnosing, designing...

All families and levels together result in 139 different qualifications, although availability depends on the autonomies: the Galician training offer consists of 98 qualifications at the moment, for instance

But not all VET varieties offer the possibility to get all levels. This only corresponds to Regular VET. And on the other hand, qualifications gained through Occupational or Ongoing VET are not compatible with Regular VET.

So, the Qualification System has been split into different and unconnected “departments”. But at the moment, all the System is under change. The aim is making all VET follow a compatibility structure: competence acquired by working, or attending Occupational or Ongoing VET will be recognized in the Regular VET qualification system. This new system will be a competence and managed by the Galician Ministry of Education, General Directorate for VET, only.

3.6. Quality standards/assurance

Quality control is different depending on the VET variety: Regular, Ongoing or Occupational, and it depends on different agents. A different issue affects the so-called “Integrated Centres”:

3.6.1. Quality control in Regular VET

It depends on the Galician Ministry of Education, and since year 2000, it is based on implementing the Norm ISO 9001/2000 in centres providing this kind of training. During the first year, only six centres joined the initiative, creating a network; every year, new centres join the initiative and create a new network. In 2004, 45 centres split in 5 networks have implemented the Norm.

Every year, one or two internal audits (with the collaboration of staff from other similar training centres) and an external one are carried out. Though standards are suggested, they can be changed by trainers; this is promoted to make trainers participate in the ongoing improvement processes.

3.6.2. Quality control in VET Integrated Centres

They have existed since 2002 and provide all kind of VET and Certificates of Competence, must implement Norm ISO 9001/2000 from their very beginning. It is a prerequisite to be an Integrated Centre. The implementation and quality control system is exactly the same than in Regular VET centres, and also depend on the Galician Ministry of Education.

3.6.3. Quality control in Occupational VET

It depends on the Galician Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour. They count on a electronic system in Internet, SIFO II (Computer System for Occupational Training), where all organizations providing Occupational VET must introduce an initial report (initial and final dates, trainers and trainees details, training programme and contents), then a monthly report about the training process (commenting any important issue dealing with it, financial justifications, attendance forms...), and a summarizing final report.

In addition, an inspector pays surprise visits once a month, stepping into the class unexpectedly in any moment of the course times provided in the SIFO II system.

3.6.4. Quality control in Ongoing VET

It does not depend on any Ministry directly, but on the so-called “Tripartite Foundation”, participated by the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the main Trade Unions and Employer Associations.

Training providers must submit an initial report fifteen days before starting classes, including training dates, hours per day, participants names, contents... in the thirty days after training is over, a final report must be sent including financial details and any important aspect happened during training. Like in Occupational VET, reports must be upload in an Internet system, and surprise visits by inspectors can happen in any moment, though they are usually less often.

But all these quality assurance processes will be changed soon, as an organization to control and manage all this is being created. It is expected to come into service next Autumn 2004: “Agency for Integrated Management, Quality and Evaluation”. It will depend on the Galician Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, and is already included in the current Galician Plan for VET, issued in 2002.

3.7. Assessment procedures and testing

Like in many other aspects, assessment procedures are different depending on the kind of VET we are talking about.

Basically, Regular VET follows traditional scholar methods, carrying out different evaluations throughout the training period. The final qualification will receive an additional mark from 0 to 10.

In Occupational and Ongoing VET, it is not an obligation to carry out different evaluations throughout the training period, and trainees are not given marks; they are simply given a qualification certificate.

In both cases, the assessment is carried out by trainers directly, and their opinion is fully recognized and accepted.

Finally, to get a Competence Certificate, applicants must call the body in charge, and agree with the evaluators about the test to be fulfilled (contents, structure, kind...). Again, the evaluator has the power to decide.

3.8. Practice of VET

VET is divided into three main categories in Spain: regular, occupational and ongoing, and labour experience can also be certified.

3.8.1. Regular VET

It depends on the educational system and is mainly addressed to people in school age. It is clearly modularized and basically split into two levels (Medium and Higher). It is provided in public or private so-called "Secondary Schools of Professional Training".

3.8.2. Occupational VET

It depends on the labour and work administration and is devoted to unemployed people with a situation of special difficulty (i.e. long-term unemployed, low qualification level...). It can be provided by public or private organizations (not necessarily schools), such as trade unions, employers associations or any other officially registered organizations with the suitable agreement with the administration.

It is regulated by the National Plan of Professional Training and Integration: Plan FIP. It is revised every three years by the Ministry of Labour, taking into account the Autonomies proposals. The Plan includes special features for every Autonomy, depending on their necessities, market characteristics, economical sectors, priority collectives, etc.

3.8.3. Ongoing VET

It also depends on the labour and work administration, but is addressed to employed workers. Its provision is under the responsibility of the social partners with suitable capacity and facilities to provide training according to legislation.

3.8.4. Professional Certificate

Referred to in Paragraph 3.4, it is officially accepted throughout Spain, and describes the specific professional competences of the occupations and the training contents linked to it. It is given after completing a test.

These certificates include:

- The occupation professional profile: set of significant professional competences for the job; it is structured into competence units referred to significant functions, stages or techniques of the professional activity.
- The training process organized as a sequence of modules, which correspond to theoretical and practical contents linked to a “competence unit”, specifying the corresponding aims and evaluation criteria.
- The total duration of the training process and of every module, expressed in hours.
- The necessary personal and material requirements to develop the corresponding training for the referred job.
- The suitable specialities and particularities in order to fulfil the necessities of people with disabilities.
- The certification tests can be attended by those people who, by means of labour experience or other non-formal learning ways (suitably accredited), have learnt all or part of the professional competences corresponding to the profile of the occupation which certificate is required.

So, the tests necessary to get this kind of certificate can be taken by people attending any work or training establishments.

3.9. Target groups policies

As seen in previous definitions, Occupational VET is intended for unemployed people, mainly those with a more difficult situation (older than 40, long-term unemployed...)

Also, for those unsuccessful in Compulsory Education or Drop Outs, there is the possibility to attend the so-called “Social Guarantee Programmes” or Professional Initiation Programmes, which follow the same principles as Regular VET. These Programmes, apart from helping trainees to acquire professional skills, allow them to go back into the Educational System, if they wish.

Finally, there are three training modalities for people with disabilities and big problems to be integrated in the labour market or to attend “conventional” training:

3.9.1. Occupational Centres for people with mental handicaps

They are an alternative to the productive activity, and are addressed to guarantee that people with high levels of disability can carry out occupational activities and receive services of personal and social adjustment. They can be managed by the administration and non-profit-making organizations.

It is provided in permanent centres, which must renew their agreement with the government every year. Every person remains in the centre as long as it is advisable for every individual case.

The organization and methodologies of the activities and tasks to be carried out in these centres tend to promote the future integration of people with disabilities to productive work.

3.9.2. Special Employment Centres (SEC)

They are a form of supported employment. For a company to be considered a SEC, 75% of the staff must have an officially recognized disability. This company figure was established in the mid 80's.

The workers must carry out productive work, with a normal working day, and the company must participate in mainstream market under any of the legal possibilities: cooperative, limited, trading company... They can be profit or non-profit making.

They are transition places for the integration of people with disabilities in mainstream labour, as well as an observatory of the reduction of the productive capacity.

As any company, it is intended for permanent active stays, or as long as possible. The activities carried out can be changed if it is considered necessary taking into account the feasibility of the firm, the evolution of the labour market, the suitability for the workers, etc.

All workers must have any of the official contracts which are possible in mainstream companies. Indefinite contracts are the most common, and all activity carried out must be paid accordingly.

The workers will stay in the centre as long as it is necessary in every individual case.

No additional training is foreseen in these centres, apart from learning by doing the job. Providing initial or/and ongoing training depends on every SEC itself.

It gives services of personal and social adjustment required by handicapped workers (the working station is adapted to the worker), and must allow to prove the possibilities of a person to access mainstream labour, as well as providing skills and attitudes for it.

3.9.3. The Labour Enclaves

It is a recent figure created in 2004, and addressed to SEC workers who present special difficulties to step into mainstream labour. Labour enclaves are jobs carried out by SEC employees in a mainstream company after a contract between this and the corresponding SEC.

The contract must state the activities every worker from the SEC must carry out, price to be paid by the company and the stay duration. The minimum stay is 3 months and the maximum 3 years, although it could last 6 years in very exceptional cases. Once this stay is over, if the worker cannot get a job in mainstream labour, he/she can come back to the SEC.

The selection of workers for a labour enclave must always be decided by the SEC, and their contractual conditions must agree with the ones stipulated for SECs.

4. BA CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The offer of BA is a common training issue in Spain at the moment, and it is provided by a wide range of organizations. For Occupational and Ongoing VET it is possible to choose between 17 professional profiles:

- Commerce administrative
- Accounting administrative
- Staff administrative
- Office employee
- Secretary
- Office telephonist / receptionist
- English: costumer service
- German: costumer service
- French: costumer service

- Portuguese: customer service
- Management secretariat
- Typewriting
- Shorthand typing
- English: commerce management
- German: commerce management
- French: commerce management
- Expert in management of salaries and social security

From all them, the most demanded is “Office Employee”. It includes some of the abilities that here appear as a professional profile, such as Typewriting or Accounting administrative). It is intended to last for 799 hours and is divided into a series of 11 modules. Trainees must complete all them to get the certification.

Regarding Partial Certification practice, it is not officially recognized. When a trainee does not succeed to fulfil all modules, the providing organization usually gives him/her a statement (not a professional certificate) indicating the completed modules and the abilities learnt, although it is not recognized by the administration and is only signed by the said organization.

4.1. Modules and training contents

a) Guidance into the labour market

- Presentation – Introduction
- Definition of professional aim
- How to find a job. Active and planned searching
- Introductory letter
- Curriculum Vitae
- Interview
- Interview simulation

b) Communication and archive administrative techniques

- Communications and enterprise
- Speech techniques
- Communication modalities
- Writing all kind of documents: applications, offices, certificates, declarations, acts, calls.
- Commercial correspondence: writing all kind of commercial letters
- Classification and archive of correspondence (alphabetic, numeric, geographic, according to matters or issues, alphanumeric....)
- Correspondence register of entries and exits

c) Office administrative techniques

- To classify the main documents produced by each company department
- To write orders, delivery notes and bills
- To write debit notes
- To fill in different kind of checks
- To fill in receipts
- Bank drafts
- Register book of bills
- VAT liquidations

d) Administrative aspects of business management

- Accountancy basic principles

- Accountancy Framework Plan
- Definitions and accountancy relations
- Accountancy books
- Organization of accountancy work
- Financial and commercial calculations
- Social Security
- Work contracts
- Making all kind of lists (new members, leaves...)
- Documents used to pay Social Security (TC1, TC2,)

e) Typewriting

- Knowing the keyboard
- All kind of exercises until getting a minimum of 250 touches per minute

f) Basic informatics

- Connecting the system
- Connecting the different peripherals
- Creating directories, deleting, formatting
- Copying files,
- Access of a user to the network
- General tasks (sharing printers, directories, messages between users, e-mail)

g) Basic office informatics

- Word. (start Word, saving a document, image formats, tables.....)
- Excel (Tool bars, introducing and modifying data, saving and opening books, creating graphics....)
- Access (Designing databases.....)
- Internet (Tool bars, searching throughout the Web, downloading programmes...)
- E-mail (Sending a message, receiving.....)

h) Advanced text processor

- Personalization of a text processor application
- Graphic boxes
- Desktop publishing with the processor
- Combining correspondence
- Labels, envelopes and forms
- Conversion of database archives
- Styles and macros
- Processor and complementary applications

i) Computer applications for business management

- Basic principles to use a computer application
- Use of a financial-accounting application
- Use of an application for staff management
- Use of an application for business and stock management

j) *Safety and health at work*

- Safety
- Risks
- Prevention and protection measures
- Accidents
- First aids
- Health and Environment quality
- Individual health
- Environment technical aspects
- Methods to conserve and manipulate products

k) *Environmental awareness*

- Introduction of the environment concept
- Pollution and deterioration of natural resources
- The city. Our environment
- The Administration procedures
- The answer by the society

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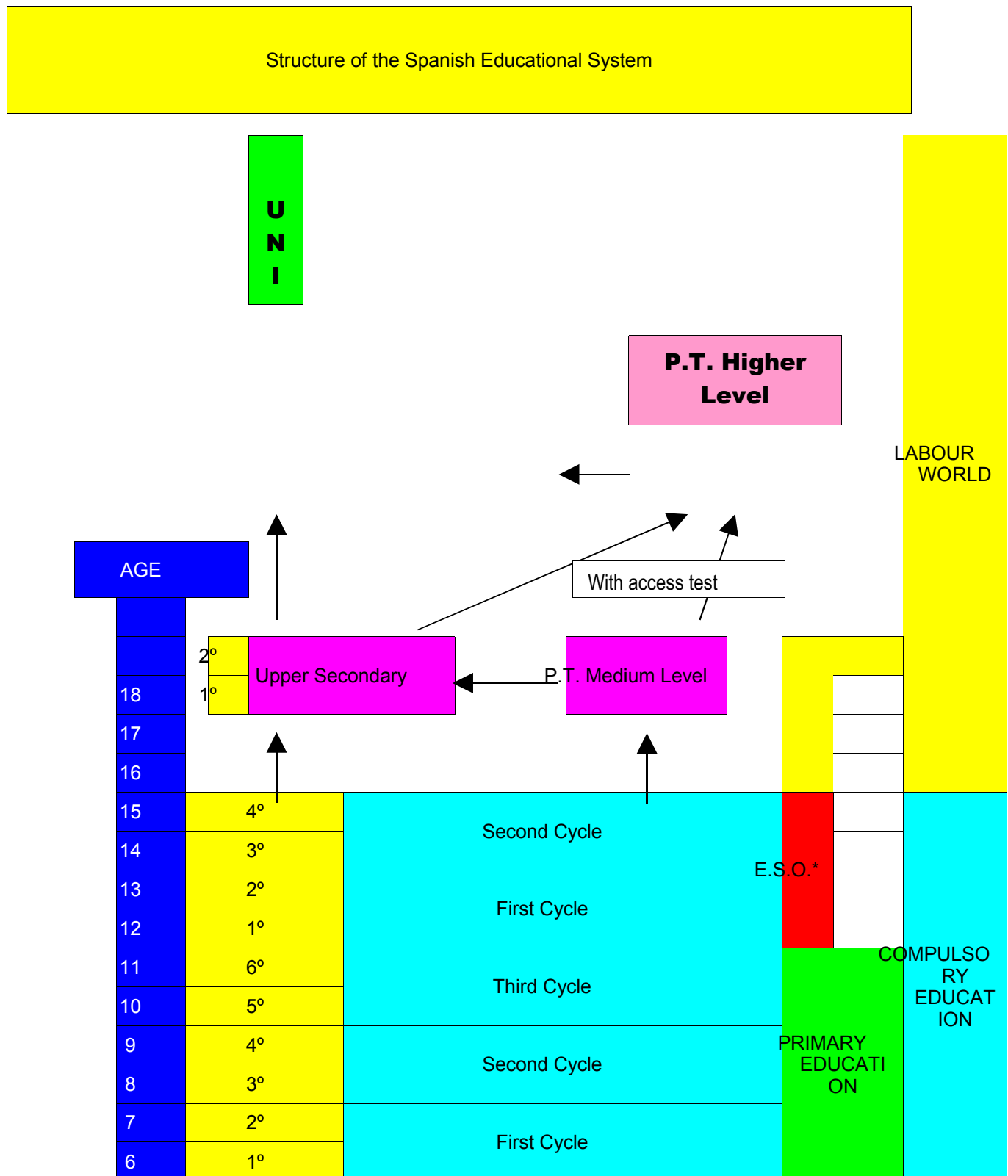
6. APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Chart of the Spanish Educational Structure

Appendix 2: VET Galician Plan

Appendix 3: Plan of Training and Professional Integration - Plan F.I.P.

CHART OF THE SPANISH EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE



5	Second Cycle	KINDERGARTEN (PRE-SCHOOL)	
4			
3			
2	First Cycle		
1			
0			

P.T.= Professional Training (Regular Vocational Training)

*= Compulsory Secondary Education

GALICIAN PLAN OF VET

The Galician Plan of VET, approved for the period 2002-2006, is based on the framework provided by the 2nd Spanish National Programme of VET. It states the necessity of linking the training policies promoted by the Administration to the demands of the different production sectors. This way, training is considered an ongoing process for the workers, and must be updated continuously.

The Plan includes and considers the three subsystems of VET: Regular (depending on the Ministry of Education), Occupational and Ongoing (both depending on the Ministry of Social Matters and Labour), recommending their integration. The aim is promoting the relationship between education, training and labour, and at the same time coordinating all the VET offer provided by private and public training/educational organizations, as well as by the social agents.

Consequently, the Plan aims at making the three subsystems inseparable parts of the policies dealing with this issue implemented in Galicia. It is the basic instrument for people to be suitably competent for the labour market demands.

The Plan has also given place to the so-called “VET Integrated Centres” (which provide the three VET subsystems), as it states that all public training and educational resources must be used at their full potential.

The Plan also highlights the necessity of having a system involving qualification, training and professional guidance to allow:

- Reaching training quality standards equivalent to the European context
- Getting high acceptance from the business organizations and society in general as a way to access employment and to progress professionally.
- Improving VET quality.

In order to fulfil these aims, the Plan develops the following action programmes:

- Reinforcing VET organizations
- Improving the system organization
- Participation of the social agents in the VET system
- Following up the labour market
- Developing the professional qualifications linked to the Galician productive structure
- Implementing a system to acknowledge, assess and certify the active population competence
- Making companies and training centres collaborate
- Creating an integrated network of information and professional guidance
- Creating a network of VET integrated centres
- Creating an integrated structure for training of trainers
- Reinforcing the implementation of basic Regular VET
- Implementing training curricula and specialities specially linked to regional and local development
- Promoting non-vocational professions demanded by the labour market
- Training for Integration to Work for youngsters looking for their first jobs
- Enlarging distance VET
- Supporting workers with training contracts
- Implementing a quality and evaluation plan for the VET subsystems

PLAN OF TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION – THE PLAN F.I.P.

Occupational VET for unemployed people is developed through this Plan. Essentially, it is made up of the following elements:

Training actions

Those actions which being included in the established programming, aim at giving unemployed workers the qualifications required by the productive system, and integrate them in labour, whenever they lack specific professional training or their qualification is not enough or suitable.

Courses programming

Yearly, the National Employment Institute (INEM) or, if it is the case, the Autonomies with competence in this issue, programme the courses, always fulfilling the aims stated in the plan by the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, according to the training necessities of the different regions and productive sectors, identified by the INEM occupational observatory and, specially, taking into account the contract tendencies during the previous 3 years, as well as the integration of the already trained pupils.

Providing training

- Courses can be available distance or in a classroom, and will include a practical stage that must be developed in workshops or in companies with which a collaboration agreement has been signed.
- The practice period carried out in companies will not mean a labour relationship between trainees and the company, and it will be previously notified to the workers's legal representatives in the company.
- The company will be able to receive an economical compensation for every trainee/practice hour, which will include the cost of an insurance for in-the-job accidents.
- It will be carried out in the FIP management organizations: the administration.
- It can also be delivered by other organizations after getting an agreement or establishing a contract-programme with the management organizations. They can be the following:
 - **Collaborating Centres**, for the specialities for which they have been recognized. They can be employers organizations, trade unions, organizations representing a business sector and Social organizations. They must sign a contract (no longer than three years) and the training actions must take in their own authorized facilities.
 - **Training public or private organizations** or companies with which a collaboration agreement has been signed, and the training actions must take place in their own authorized facilities.

The call for proposals addressed to the Collaborating Organizations and Centres, to take part in the corresponding programming, must take place during the last three months previous to the start of the yearly activities.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will establish the specialities that can be provided at distance.

Workers who can be benefited

All unemployed workers.

Preference to participate in these training actions will be given the following collectives:

- a) Unemployment time-period, according to the following priority order:
 - 1. Job-seekers younger than 25, being in this situation from 3 to 6 months, and job seekers older than 25, being in this situation from 3 to 12 months;
 - 2. Job-seekers during periods longer than the stated above and
 - 3. Job seekers during periods shorter than 3 months.
- b) Being in the condition of beneficiary of unemployment grant or subsidy.
- c) Having family responsibilities.
- d) People with Disabilities.
- e) Women.

UNITED KINGDOM

1. INTRODUCTION

Leeds Second Chance School is situated in *JOBS AND SKILLS SERVICE*, a department within the Department of Learning and Leisure of Leeds City Council. The school targets disadvantaged learners and those who have dropped out of mainstream education and offers a wide range of academic and vocational qualifications, mainly at entry level, through partnerships with local Colleges of Further Education and employers.

The department of JOBS and SKILLS can also certificate the customised training it offers to employers through the Quality Licence, which it has from NCFE, a national accrediting body in the UK.

As part of the PACE project, Leeds Second Chance School has made contact with accrediting bodies such as *City and Guilds of London* and *NCFE*, carried out internet research to keep up to date with Government policy and actions for education and training, researched policy of other experts such as employers, trade unions and NGO's and established relationships with practitioners such as teachers, assessors and curriculum managers.

The development of partial qualifications by Leeds Second Chance School, through the PACE project, will be disseminated to the accrediting body NCFE and it is expected that such qualifications will be approved for use by Leeds City Council under the Quality Licence A and B agreement.

2. THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE UK

The mainstream education system in the UK is divided into two parts—*Primary School* Education from ages 5-11 years and *Secondary School* Education from 11-16 years, and an optional extra 2 years from 16-18 years. The official school leaving age is 16 years.

Pupils are entered for the General Certificate of Secondary Education qualifications (GCSE's) in up to 9 subjects, which must include English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, 2 Sciences, a foreign language and a technical subject.

Pupils may then continue their studies at school, working towards Advanced Level certificates of secondary education ("A" levels) or vocational qualifications at various levels, or move to a College of Further Education, which specialises in vocational qualifications. Depending on the level at which they study, they may stay for 1-3 years, before moving to employment or HE.

Alternatively, young people may progress to Modern Apprenticeship training for 2-3 years, provided by private training organisations which links with employers and on-the-job training. They work towards qualifications, which have the same value as GCSE's or "A" levels, but are competence based for the job.

Progression to *Higher Education* at university is usually at 18 years of age, either directly from school or a College of FE. Degree courses for a Bachelor qualification (BA, Bsc, B.Ed) are 3 years with 4 years for a "sandwich" course, which includes 1 year in industry. Progression to HE requires either academic or vocational qualifications, or a mixture of both.

3. THE VET AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEM IN THE UK

3.1. *Historical Development*

The UK qualification and assessment system is currently undergoing a massive overhaul as a result of a review of the system in recent years, carried out by the *Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA)*

Historically over 100 organisations awarded a wide range of qualifications in general, vocational and occupational subject areas, and at different levels. Some organisations specialised in academic qualifications, which were delivered in schools (OCEAC-Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board), others specialised in sectors such as sport (BAGA- British Amateur Gymnastics Association), while others specialised in vocational and occupational qualifications (City and Guilds).

The independence of these awarding bodies meant that, although their qualifications were nationally recognised, without a national framework, the parity of such qualifications was difficult to measure. This led to confusion for learners, providers of education and training and employers.

The UK also had different regulatory authorities, which were responsible for:

- the development of curriculum (general and vocational)
- the different providers of education—schools and colleges,
- the different regulatory authorities responsible for the development of qualifications. These were finally brought under one umbrella in England with the formation of *QCA (Qualification and Curriculum Authority)* and *ACCAC* and *CCEA* representing Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

On 9th July 2003 the Government launched its skills strategy in the White paper *21st Century Skills: realising our potential : individuals, employers, nation*

The strategy brings together key partners to ensure that employers have the right skills to support their business and that individuals have the skills they need to be employable. QCA has played a significant role in the development of the strategy, particularly in the reform of vocational qualifications.

Key reforms include:

- Free learning for any adult who does not have a good foundation of skills for employability, to help them achieve a full level 2 qualification
- Expanding the Adult basic Skills campaign to make information and communication technology the third essential “skill for life”, alongside literacy and numeracy
- Expanding the Sector Skills Council network to identify, map and meet key skills needs in employment sectors. The councils will develop agreements on the action that needs to be taken to tackle the skills gap.
- Developing a national programme for employers, to deliver training in the way that they want it, particularly for lower skilled employees
- Reforming qualifications to make them more employer friendly and responsive to business needs—helping employers to package units of training in different areas to form the training programme that best meets their needs.
- Ensuring greater employer involvement in the design and delivery of modern apprenticeships.

3.2. Legal Framework

3.2.1. The QCA

The Trade and Industry Secretary said “the skills gap hits business hard, and this strategy puts their needs first. It recognises that our education system must meet the needs of the workplace”

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions said “Improving skills is central to our goal of full employment as it is often the key that can unlock the door to a job”

The government *Department of Education and Skills (DFES)* charged the QCA with the following tasks:

- to develop a single framework of sector/subject areas
- to revise the National Qualification Framework
- to develop a more responsive and flexible vocational qualifications system.

3.2.2. The SCC's

General skills and sector specific skill needs have been identified in the *Sector Workforce Development Plan* and *Skills Foresight report*.

Five Trailblazer Sector Skills Councils are pioneering the Sector Skills network. These are:

- Skillset—the SCC for Audio Visual Industries (broadcast, film, video)
- Lantra—the SCC for the Environmental and Land based sector⁹ farming, agriculture, forestry, rural development)
- Cogent—the SCC for the oil and gas extraction, chemicals, manufacturing and petroleum industry
- Skills-fast UK—the SCC for the apparel, footwear and textile industry
- Skillsmart—the SCC for the retail sector

The SCC's will enable sector employers to have a far greater impact on policies affecting skills and productivity, and increased influence with education and training partners.

3.2.3. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

It was established in September 2002 to rationalise and standardise the qualifications offered nationally.

The revised framework comes into effect from 1 September 2004, following a public consultation, which was completed in November 2003. Awarding bodies should be making arrangements to comply with the revised criteria for the national Qualifications Framework (NQF) now. Only qualifications that have been accredited by the *Qualifications and Curriculum Authority* are included in the NQF.

3.2.4. The system of qualifications

To help meet the governments strategy a unit-based national system of qualifications and credit is being developed, which will recognise diverse achievement. QCA must provide a plan for implementing a credit system by 31st March 2004 to the government *Department of Education and Skills*.

QCA is working towards assigning a credit value to all existing units in the NQF. In parallel with QCA, the Learning Skills Council, which funds providers of education, is working towards the development and funding of partial qualifications.

3.3. Financial Framework

Only qualifications, which have been approved by QCA, will appear in the NQF and receive government funding. Government funds for education and training are divided into 3 areas—for schools, Post 16 education and Higher Education. Funding for schools is given directly to the Local Authorities to their Departments of Education.

Funding for Post 16 education and training, which takes place in Colleges of Further Education or private training organisations, is given to the *Learning Skills Council*. Providers then negotiate with the LSC for funds for courses, which is linked to outputs.

(Enrolments, retention, achievement) Additional funds are divided between local *Learning Skills Councils*, which determine local needs and attach funding to specific outputs. Providers of education and training can bid for this additional funding.

3.4. Organisations

3.4.1. Awarding Bodies

Over 50 exam Boards have now been amalgamated into main awarding bodies. These include —AQA (Assessment and Qualification Alliance), CCEA (for Northern Ireland) Edexcel Foundation, OCR (Oxford, Cambridge and RSA) and WJEC (for Wales) City and Guilds, NCFE. Awarding Bodies certificate the learning that has taken place and monitor the quality of the assessment process. They develop qualifications according to the quality criteria set down by QCA, and must submit all new qualifications for approval, in order to be included in the NQF

3.4.2. National Bodies

A new network of *Sector Skills Councils* brings together employers, trade unions and professional bodies. They are independent UK wide organisations, which are employer led stakeholders in the sectors. SSC's are licensed by the Government to tackle the skills and productivity needs of their sector throughout the UK. The *Sector Skills Development Agency* has been established to underpin the SSC network and to promote effective working between sectors.

3.4.3. National Occupational Skills Board

Led by employers, it is an independent group whose remit is to set the strategy and oversee the funding of national occupational standards development. National Occupational standards are statements of the skills' knowledge and understanding needed in employment and they inform vocational qualifications. This means that the performance criteria within vocational qualifications, by which learners are assessed, are matched to the competences required within jobs. Therefore training and qualifications are designed to meet the needs of employers and the job market.

3.4.4. Qualifications at entry level

QCA is currently overseeing the development of guidelines for the Sector Skills Councils to look at qualifications at Entry level for those who are working below level 1 within the NQF. This is to ensure that Entry-level qualifications provide an accurate introduction to the sector, reflect actual working practices and are pitched at an appropriate level.

3.4.5. "Jobs and Skills" in Leeds

Research by *Jobs and Skills* in the city of Leeds identified the number of job vacancies advertised in 2003 and classified them into sectors and levels of skills required. The purpose of this was to identify trends in job vacancies, the skills gap, with the purpose of developing customised training programmes to meet the needs of the job market. The main jobs in business administration were classified at Entry-level 1 and Entry level 2. Curriculum at Entry 1 would focus on gaining some knowledge and experience in the sector, while Level 2 would focus more on the experience element to be gained in work (supervisory, people, planning and organisational skills). Research had identified occupations with main tasks and features for a business administrator at entry level to the job market and the qualifications, which were available at levels 1 and 2 for this job.

In carrying out research for occupations in the multi-media field it was discovered that although this is a rapidly expanding occupational area, with many different types of jobs, most qualifications were at a high level, with no qualifications developed for those at Entry level who need to grasp the basic elements of using multi-media before moving onto national qualifications at level 1 and 2.

Under its Quality Licence A and B, validated NCFE awarding body, *Jobs and Skills* has developed a range of units for Business Administration to meet the requirements of the job market, targeting those who are normally excluded through lack of qualifications and lack of experience. Other Licence B qualifications include units in ICT and Multi-Media. Licence A can be obtained as stand alone units and is awarded by Leeds City Council as an “in-house” qualification. If 4 units are acquired then the learner achieves Licence B, which is awarded by NCFE. Examples of these units are in the Annexes.

Four units have been developed in Basic Graphic Design which are awaiting validation by NCFE) These will form the core units for Quality Licence B. Further option units will also be developed for multi-media.

3.5. Qualification Systems: The National Qualifications Framework

The *National Qualifications Framework (NQF)* illustrates the level and category of qualifications, which have been accredited by QCA. The *NQF* was established by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in September 2000 in order to:

- Clarify the relationship between qualifications
- Establish broad equivalence between qualifications
- Identify routes of progression between qualifications
- Command public and professional confidence in the qualification system

Qualifications within the framework are divided into 3 categories; general, vocational-related and occupational. General qualifications are those, which attest attainment in a subject. Vocationally related qualifications attest attainment in a vocational area and occupational qualifications attest attainment of achievement in the workplace.

All these qualifications are offered at 6 levels—Entry level (usually for pre-16's or those with special learning needs or basic skills needs) and Levels 1-5. The level of a qualification is decided by the degree of knowledge, skills and understanding within the qualification. A level 2 qualification is the accepted level for employability and is comparable to the General Certificate of Secondary Education, which school leavers take at 16.

For the purpose of the PACE project Level 1 qualifications will be comparable to lower level qualifications and level 2 qualifications will be comparable to medium level qualifications.

All qualifications have to meet a set of common criteria before they are accredited into the *NQF*. Each awarding organisation must now conform to a common code of practice and submit all their qualifications to QCA before being accepted into the framework. This process is currently ongoing, with over 4,000 qualifications already accepted.

Awarding organisations are closing down non-accredited qualifications or revising them to meet the common standards. Providers of education will not receive funding to run non-accredited qualifications.

The table below shows the National Qualification Framework into which qualifications will be fitted.

Level of Qualification	General	Vocationally-related	Occupational
5	Higher level qualifications BTEC Higher nationals	Higher level qualifications BTEC Higher nationals	Level 5 NVQ
4	Higher level qualifications BTEC Higher nationals	Higher level qualifications BTEC Higher nationals	Level 4 NVQ
3 (Advanced level)	A Levels	Vocational A Levels Advanced GNVQ	Level3 NVQ
2 Intermediate level)	GCSE Grades A*-C	Intermediate GNVQ	Level 2 NVQ
1 (Foundation level)	GCSE Grades D-G	Foundation GNVQ	Level1 NVQ
Entry	Entry level certificate	Entry level certificate	Entry level certificate

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ's) are based on National Occupational Standards and are industry-led. They are flexible and unit-based and can facilitate small steps to achievement. Assessment is carried out in the workplace and the qualification, which is competence based, is available at 5 levels. A Lead Body, consisting of-employers, professional bodies and consultants to draw up occupational standards, develops them. QCA considers the proposed National Occupational Standards against set criteria for NVQ's. NVQ's consists of:

- *Units*-Competences recognisable as main part of a job
- *Elements*-Overall description of what a person should do
- *Performance Criteria*-Definition of the acceptable level of performance
- *Range*-The various circumstances which can be applied
- *Knowledge*-Facts needed to perform the task
- *Evidence Requirements*-what is required to demonstrate competence

Vocational Qualifications (VQ's) are accredited into the NQF and cover almost every industry sector. They are knowledge-based qualifications offered by colleges and schools and can be broad base or specific for a particular sector. In partnership with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA), the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has a remit to extend the take-up of vocational qualifications, particularly with 14-19 year olds.

3.6. Quality Standards/Assurance

QCA is the regulatory body, which ensures that all qualifications meet standard criteria and gave parity of esteem across academic, vocational and general sectors. The National Occupational Standards Board ensures that the outcomes of competence performance are clearly defined in occupational standards. Awarding Bodies are responsible for the *External Verification* of qualifications. Providers of education and training must pass a rigorous assessment of quality systems and assessment before they are validated to offer awarding body qualifications.

Providers are advised of the full range of assessment techniques and methods of presenting evidence that are acceptable in the occupational sectors.

Providers must have a system of *Internal verification, which focuses on the accuracy*, and consistency of assessor's judgements against the requirements of the national standards. Records of assessment are audited by the External Verifier

3.7. Assessment Procedures

3.7.1. Introduction

Learners are observed and assessed in the workplace, usually by someone senior to them. To achieve a full NVQ each learner must prove competence. Competence is measured against a set of common criteria and across a range of knowledge.

3.7.2. Assessor's role

The primary role of the assessor is to make accurate, objective judgements about the competence of learners against prescribed criteria which meets the national standards. The assessor provides support and teaches the underpinning knowledge. Learners gather "evidence" to support their competence. Evidence can include direct observation of performance, photographic, audio or video recording, previous achievements, presentation of artefacts. Evidence is collected in a portfolio for assessment and then internally verified before submission for certification. An element of externally set testing is now also part of the assessment process for Vocational Qualifications, although not NVQ's.

3.7.3. Internal Verifier

The role is to check that the assessor's judgement is sound and that assessment has been fair. The Internal verifier must provide support for the assessor and make sure that the quality standards set out by the awarding body are maintained. The IV will sample at least 10% of all assessments.

3.7.4. External Verifier

The role is to ensure that awarding body quality standards are maintained, that internal verification is carried out and that assessment is fair, relevant and current. Providers of education and training are visited twice yearly to check the quality assurance systems

3.7.5. Assessment standards

Although educational providers have a choice regarding the awarding body, which they use for certification, the process for validation and assessment is standardised. Providers must have quality control systems in place—for assessment, internal verification, appeals, self-assessment, in order to satisfy the rigorous validation requirements. Additionally organisations must deliver the programmes of qualifications against the standards for learning within *The Common Inspection Framework*. The *Adult learning Inspectorate* is the regulatory body that ensures quality standards in teaching and learning are met through a cycle of 4 yearly inspections of training and education providers.

3.8. Practice of VET

3.8.1. Introduction

Providers of education and training in the UK have been familiar with on-the job training and development of skills since the introduction of NVQ's in the late 1980's. During the pilot period of NVQ's the change in the structure and assessment procedures was dramatic, taking learning out of the classroom and into the workplace. The focus changed from knowledge based vocational qualifications to competence based vocational qualifications. Although "learning by doing" was one of the oldest methods of learning, the NVQ qualification now allowed for this learning to be certificated. Supervisors in working environments are trained to be assessors of competence and skills.

3.8.2. The GNVQ's

The NVQ system was later adapted to vocational qualifications which are delivered in the classroom in the format of General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ's). These qualifications are available at 3 levels and across a range of vocational sectors and are offered by Colleges of Further Education and schools. Teachers and Tutors change their roles and must become assessors and facilitators of learning.

The structure of all vocational qualifications now follow the format of NVQ's, with learners providing knowledge and skills in a portfolio of evidence. Assessors match the evidence to performance criteria. Internal Verifiers and external Verifiers check the process of assessment

3.8.3. Training programmes

Programmes of training and education vary in length of time and mode of learning. The system is designed to be flexible, where learners must complete a designated number of hours in order to achieve the qualification. The number of units in the qualification determines the number of hours. Qualifications at Level 1 can be as little as 30 hours and at Level 2 as little as 60 hours. A normal full time qualification at Levels 1 and 2 would take 1 year in College of Further Education, while the same course at a training organisation could be done in 6 months. Providers can offer distance learning, e learning as well as full and part time courses.

3.8.4. Certificate of Unit Accreditation

If learners are unable to achieve a full qualification then they can receive a *Certificate of Unit Accreditation* for each whole unit, which has been completed and moderated by the assessor.

3.9. Target Groups

The GCSE qualifications are used as the benchmark for employability. These qualifications are achieved in the last year of mainstream education, prior to the official school leaving age and are graded at Level 2. Level 3 qualifications are needed for entry to university.

Level 1 qualifications measure the competence, which involves the application of knowledge and skills in the performance of a range of varied work activities, most of which may be routine or predictable. They are suitable for those who have learning difficulties or disabilities or who need additional support prior to attempting level 2, particularly those who are unemployed or have no qualifications.

Level 2 qualifications measure competence which involves the application of knowledge and skills in a significant range of varied work activities, performed in a variety of contexts. Some of the activities are complex or non-routine, and there is some individual responsibility and autonomy. Collaboration with others, perhaps through membership of a work group or team,

may often be a requirement. These are suitable for those who have no qualifications, the ability to achieve level 2 and who show general employability skills.

4. BA AND ICT CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES

4.1. Administration

Both Vocationally-related qualifications (VRQ) and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) are accredited within the framework at levels 1 and 2. However, not all awarding organisations have adapted their existing qualifications to fit the new common standards yet.

City and Guilds offers a VRQ in Administration under its Pitman Qualifications portfolio at levels 1 and 2. Both are accredited within the *NQF*.

At both levels learners must complete and pass 5 units to achieve a full award. Learners take 2 mandatory units and then choose 1 unit from Option group A and 2 units from Option group B. All units must be achieved within 24 months. Certificates can be achieved for each whole unit that has been successfully completed, for those unable to complete the full qualification.

VRQ Level 1 in Administration

UNITS	TITLE
Mandatory	Office Procedures Level 1
	Word Processing Techniques Foundation
Optional Group A	English for Business Communication level 1
	English for Office Skills level 1
Optional Group B	Audio Transcription
	Business Studies
	Commercial Numeracy
	Practical data Processing Elementary
	Shorthand Speed
	Spreadsheet Processing Techniques
	Text Production Skills
	Desktop Publishing

VRQ Level 2 In Administration

UNITS	TITLE
Mandatory	Office Procedures level 2
	Word processing techniques
Optional Group A	English for Business Communication
	English for Office Skills level 2
Optional Group B	Audio Transcriptions-Intermediate
	Business Studies Level 2
	Commercial Numeracy Level 2
	Practical Data Processing –Intermediate
	Shorthand Speed
	Spreadsheet processing techniques
	Desktop publishing Level 2
	Graphic design and document Preparation –intermediate
	Data security and safety

City and Guilds also offers NVQ's under their Pitman Qualifications portfolio at levels 1 and 2. The aim of these qualifications is to demonstrate practical competence in the workplace from business administration occupations.

At level 1 learners must complete 3 mandatory units and 2 optional units .The syllabus covers effective teamwork, health and safety, routine document preparation, data entry on computers and mail distribution.

At Level 2 learners must complete 5 mandatory units and 3 optional units. The syllabus covers Health and safety, Teamwork, Improve own work, Printing from a computer, filing, entering data into and extracting from a data base, customer service, maintain stock,, mail, events, receiving visitors, using IT, e-mail, simple spreadsheets, notes, photocopying, making payments and supporting debt collection.

4.2. ICT (Information and Communication Technology)

4.2.1. VRQ' s(Vocationally-related qualification)

At levels 1 and 2 learners must complete 2 mandatory units and 2 optional units to achieve the full qualification. Methods of assessment include practical tests and, which are multiple choice test of 35 minutes. Learners must prove their competence by providing evidence of achievement within a portfolio and by passing the externally set tests. If a learner is unable to achieve a full qualification, they may receive a *certificate of unit credit* for each whole unit that has been successfully completed.

VRQ Level 1- Certificate for IT users

UNIT	TITLE
Mandatory	IT Principles 1
	IT Principles 2
Optional units	Word processing
	Spreadsheets
	Databases
	Using the Internet
	Presentation Graphics
	Email
	Desk top publishing

VRQ Level 2 –Diploma for IT Users

UNIT	TITLE
Mandatory	IT Principles 1
	IT principles 2
Optional units	Word processing
	Spreadsheets
	Databases
	Using the internet
	Presentation graphics
	Computerised accounts
	Desk top publishing
	Multimedia
	Website design

Desktop Publishing qualifications are only available from Level 1 and above. In the UK the agreed benchmark for employability is level 2. These are suitable for those with basic IT and word processing skills, but little or no knowledge of Desktop Publishing software packages. They are also suitable for those with or without experience, but with professional or personal ambitions. As with all UK qualifications, Desktop Publishing qualifications are offered by a number of validating bodies and are broken down into units to enable learners to gain partial

qualifications. A Certificate of Achievement is issued for each Unit, which is attained. When all units are attained then a full qualification is issued.

Qualifications are available at levels 1,2 and 3, in Desktop , for Apple Mac Computer and PC's. Colleges often break the qualifications down into smaller parts to enable learners achieve either partial qualifications, develop skills or improves skills eg, Desktop Publishing for Page Design and Graphics (City and Guilds), Desktop Publishing for the MAC (OCN), Quark Xpress, Make Your own Cards and Posters using Publisher, Desktop Publishing Skills

There are currently no qualifications available for those who have learning difficulties and need an Entry-level qualification before progressing to level 1 and 2. It is this area that Leeds Second Chance School will focus on, to develop partial qualifications for learners with learning difficulties, who find it difficult to attain full qualifications, or who want a "small step" approach to achievement.

VRQ Level 1- Desk Top Publishing

UNIT	Title
Mandatory	Use desktop publishing software and manage files
	Set up page and publications layout
	Manipulate text
	Manipulate graphic objects
	Produce printed and file outputs

VRQ Level 1-: Certificate in Graphic Design Skills

UNIT	TITLE
Mandatory	Explore graphic processes, materials and techniques
	Explore sources of ideas in a graphic design context
	Explore and develop ideas
	Produce and present final graphic solution

VQR Level 1- Foundation Certificate in Multimedia Design

UNIT	Title
Mandatory	Explore multimedia products and services
	Understand and use computer systems in a multimedia design environment
	Explore ideas and create multimedia content
	Assemble multimedia products to produce final work

NVQ's (National Vocational Qualifications) in IT consist of 5 mandatory units at level 1 and 4 mandatory units and 2 optional units at level 2.

Learners are observed and assessed in the workplace and build a portfolio of evidence to prove their competence. The evidence is generated while they carry out everyday tasks in their job.

The syllabus at level 1 consists of access and maintain IT systems, enter and find effective working practices, output information using IT.

At Level 2 the syllabus includes enable the use of IT, contribute to the effectiveness of the working environment, health and safety, improve own effectiveness, spreadsheets, email, graphic design and databases.

4.3. Unitisation and Credits within the National Qualification Framework

In 1997 responses to the Governments consultation on post 16 qualifications showed growing support for some form of unitised, credit-based system of qualifications. In 1998 QCA carried out initial explorations of the principles behind unitisation. This formed the basis for a wider consultation of awarding organisations, employers, trade unions, National Training organisations, Local Education Authorities and Further and Higher education Institutions.

In 1999 QCA advised that it would ensure that the National Qualification Framework provided flexibility for adults through a movement towards a system of unit-based qualifications.

In 2000 a QCA pilot project involving 30 Further Education Colleges showed a demand for unit-based programmes. QCA advised that adults seek flexibility and recognition of small steps of achievement and opportunities to progress. The government accepted the recommendation to develop a top-down model for a unitised system—where the framework is based on whole qualifications, which should consist of units, which can be individually assessed and reported.

4.4. Single framework of Sector/Subject areas

In March 2001 the QCA received a remit from Government Ministers to develop a single framework of sector/subject areas with the purpose of developing a more rational system of categories, sectors and subjects. These would be comprehensive enough to cover all qualification types, subject areas and employment sectors. The Single Framework of Sector/Subject areas would help to reduce the confusion amongst users, complement or replace existing classification systems and also help when classifying qualifications. Following a 2-year consultation period the new framework was implemented from 1st October 2003, identifying 15 sector/subject areas.

The following table shows the revised classifications for the ICT and Business sectors.

FIRST TIER	SECOND TIER	DEFINITION AND INDICATIVE CONTENT
6.Information and Communication Technology	6.1 ICT Practitioner	Studies and skills in design, development, testing, installation, maintenance, support and management of information and communication hardware and software technologies, architectures, systems and networks For example: IT Hardware development; Telecommunications Hardware Developing IT programs; Programming; Telecommunications Software Developing IT systems; Information systems; Installing and Supporting IT systems; Managing IT systems; Managing IT for Telework; IT systems support
	6.2 ICT for Users	Studies and skills in the use of information and communication technologies. For example: Computing; Keyboard Skills; Operating IT systems; Using IT; Using IT Teleworking

15. Business, Administration and Law	15.1 Accounting and Finance	Studies and skills in the rules, standards and methods of financial accounting. Studies and skills in financial systems, regulations and reporting For example: Accountancy/Accounting; Accounting administration; Accounting theory; Audit; Banking; Book-keeping; Finance; Financial Advice; Financial Planning; Financial service; Financial studies; Investment and Insurance, Mortgage advice and practice; Taxation
	15.2 Administration	Studies and skills in organisations and the environments in which they operate. Includes: the generic and specialist skills involved in organisational; administration. For example: Administration; Office skills; Payroll Administration; Pensions Administration; Secretarial skills
	15.3 Business Management	Studies and skills in managing organisations. Includes: the management of an organisation's relationship with its customers, stakeholders and its environment, and human resource management.

Within the PACE project, Leeds Second Chance School will focus on 6.2 ICT for Users, particularly focusing on the use of Multi-media, for research and development of resources in the work packages.

5. REFERENCES

Web sources:

For further information on NQF: <http://www.qca.org.uk/nq/framework/>
QCA provides a European and International dimension to England's curriculum and qualification system on its website: [http:// www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)
The full Sector framework can be found on http://www.qca.org.uk/nq/accreditation/subject_sector_framework.asp